

Getting There, Being There, Making a Difference?
gendered discourses of access and action
in local politics

Fiona Mackay

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh
1996



DECLARATION

This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university.

**Fiona Mackay
February, 1996**

In memory of my father, Robert Mackay

Abstract

This thesis aims to further our understanding of the relationship between gender relations, political structures and political action. There are two broad questions posed by the study of women in political elites. The first asks why there are so few women in politics; and the second asks whether the (increased) presence of women makes a difference in terms of, for instance, political agenda or policy outcome. The thesis examines the ways in which gender is relevant to women's experience as political actors in terms of their access, presence and agency in local decision-making assemblies. Data were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews with 53 female councillors across political party, in four Scottish local authorities. In addition, a case study was undertaken into a policy initiative common to the four authorities.

Section I uses the councillors' narratives to examine the way in which gender relations shape and impede access to political elites; and explores the justifications they offered to promote the increased presence of women. The objective was to place these discourses within the context of contemporary theories and political debates about equality and representation; and recent suggestions with regard to feminist political theories of care. It was found that women had a clear understanding of the gendered barriers to equal participation in politics and perceived them as rooted in the sexual division of labour. Their discussions of gendered realities exposed the limitations of dominant constructions of equal opportunities and 'fairness' which have, to date, failed to deliver significant improvements in levels of women's political representation, particularly at Westminster. Women also forwarded complex reasons and justifications for the increased access of women into decision-making bodies, including the assertion that women make a difference *qua* women.

The case study of *Zero Tolerance*, an anti-violence public awareness campaign, is explored in Section II. The campaign, which uses a feminist analysis, has attracted considerable interest throughout the UK, Europe and the world. In Scotland, it has increased public and political debate about violence against women and children, and has raised the issue higher up the political agenda. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is an ideal site to explore the theoretical expectation of certain feminist models that the feminisation of political elites (in terms of the increased numerical presence) will lead to the greater promotion of positive policies for women; an expectation which resonates with the perceptions of many women interviewed. It also allows examination of the hypothesis that there are structural factors which may inhibit or enable the development, expression and active pursuit of gendered politics.

Although women councillors do not generally identify themselves as feminist, many are 'pro-equality' and do act as agents or supporters of change, indicating a greater sense of cross-party acceptance of gender issues as legitimate within local government than has generally been argued. All but a few women can be placed along a continuum of gender consciousness and commitment. This continuum ranges from 'weak' political identification to the energetic promotion of women's interests. A complex picture emerges where successful agenda setting and implementation of equalities initiatives is linked to a combination of enabling factors. In particular, the creation and maintenance of equalities structures, women's and equal opportunities committees, are significant in providing both the organisational space and the political space in which to initiate change. All participating authorities had equalities structures in place, staffed by specialist officers.

Zero Tolerance was a strong campaign initiated by feminist specialist officers and dedicated feminist councillors which found broad support from women councillors, feminist and non-feminist, across party. Although support was not unqualified nor uncritical, it was unprecedented in the experience of local government gender politics; and was crucial to the success of the campaign. This indicates both the personal and political salience of the issue for the women councillors themselves, and also a recognition of its significance to women in the community.

The thesis concludes that gender intervenes in a complex, sometimes contradictory way in women's access, presence and action in political elites. At a minimal level, almost all women acknowledge the political relevance of gender. They invoke the rhetoric of difference when discussing barriers to access and when justifying the inclusion of women in political elites; and at empirical level there is evidence to back their contention that they make a difference. The findings suggest that most women politicians have at least a 'weak' gender consciousness which, in combination with certain enabling structural factors, can result in the promotion of gender policies. In the case study this took the form of an emerging 'women's politics', a broad-based coalition which crossed traditional boundaries, and where women as women were successful at intervening in the local state and making a difference.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>List of tables and figures</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	<i>viii</i>
Introduction	1
1 Background and Methods	11
SECTION I : DISCOURSES OF EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE	
2 Representations and reasonings	38
3 In the way of women : barriers to political life	67
4 What is to be done? Models and measures	91
5 Justice, maternal thinking and the political ethic of care	123
6 Common sense : new discourses of equality and difference?	144
SECTION II : WOMEN IN THE MACHINE	
7 Gender consciousness, political structures and political action	182
8 The <i>Zero Tolerance</i> campaign: women's politics in action?	231
9 CONCLUSIONS: getting there, being there, making a difference?	278
Appendix A Interview schedule	290
Appendix B Fieldwork report	295
Appendix C Published papers	301
Bibliography	335

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for permission to reproduce the following article:

'The Case of *Zero Tolerance* : Women's Politics in Action ?' , in *Waverley Papers* , University of Edinburgh Department of Politics, 1995

My thanks to the people who have provided support and help for this study. I am grateful to my supervisors Dr Alice Brown in the Department of Politics at the University of Edinburgh and Prof. Lindsay Paterson, now at Moray House, Heriot Watt University, for their advice and encouragement.

I owe a special debt to the 53 women councillors who agreed to be interviewed. They were generous and patient, despite pressures on their time; and I gained many insights from their stimulating discussions. Many thanks also to the women's and equal opportunities officers, women's advocacy group workers, and party members whose briefings were invaluable.

Many thanks to Sue Innes, Louise Tait and Georgie Young who read and commented on all or part of earlier drafts; and gave computer assistance, encouragement, and moral support. All errors are, of course, my own.

I greatly appreciate the support of the Economic and Social Research Council who provided me with a Postgraduate Research Studentship (R00429234193) from 1992-1995; and the support of Prof. Malcolm Anderson at the International Social Sciences Institute at the University of Edinburgh, who provided me with an graduate assistantship, and a congenial place to finish writing up. My thanks also to Dilys Rennie and Michael J. Prince at ISSI; and to Jane Mears.

I am grateful to the many friends and family members who have helped in different ways. Special thanks are due to my late father Robert Mackay, my mother Ruth Mackay and my aunt Phoebe Fell.

And finally, of course, a big thank-you to the two Georgies.

List of Tables and Figures

Figures

3.1	Norris and Lovenduski's Comparative Model of the Recruitment Process	69
8.1	Visuals from the Zero Tolerance Campaign: First Phase	244
8.2	Visuals from the Zero Tolerance Campaign: First Phase	244
8.3	Visuals from the Zero Tolerance Campaign: First Phase	245
8.4	Visuals from the Zero Tolerance Campaign: First Phase	245

Tables

2.1	Reasons stated for women's greater political representation	49
2.2	Do you agree with the view that women politicians represent the interests of women in the community better than male politicians do?	57
2.3	Do you agree with the statement that women and men behave differently in politics?	62
6.1	Comparison of women councillors interest in standing for the Westminster and Scottish parliaments	176
7.1	Comparison of female councillors' identification with women's movement and feminism	196
7.2	Recognition of connection with women in the community	203
B.1	Breakdown of women councillors by authority/ party grouping	300
B.2	Degree of political activism or political interest in councillors' childhood homes	302

List of Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
CLP	Constituency Labour Party
CoSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
EDC	Edinburgh District Council
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ERC	Edinburgh Rape Crisis centre
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MOSAC	Mothers of Sexually Abused Children
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NALGWC	National Association of Local Government Women's Committees
NWAC	Women's Action Committee
RC	Regional Council
SCOW	Scottish Convention of Women
SLGIU	Scottish Local Government Information Unit
SRC	Strathclyde Regional Council
SNP	Scottish National Party
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
SWA	Scottish Women's Aid
SWEOF	Scottish Women and Equal Opportunities Officers Forum
UK	United Kingdom
WEOCS	Women's and Equal Opportunities Committees
WLAN	Women's Local Authority Network
WI	Women's Institute

Introduction

This thesis aims to further our understanding of the complex relationship between gender relations, political structures and political action. There are two broad questions posed by the study of women in political elites. The first relates to the reasons for the numerical under-representation of women and asks why there *are* so few women in politics; the second relates to the political relevance of gender which asks *what difference* the presence of women makes to, for instance, political style, political agenda and policy outcome. The thesis examines the ways in which gender is relevant to women's experience as political actors in terms of their access, presence and agency in political elites.

The thesis contends that there is a sense of closure within political discourses around women's political under-representation in the UK, which is caused, in part, by the limitations of dominant constructions of equality, representation and equal opportunities. This closure has contributed to the failure to make any significant gains in levels of representation at national level in the post-war period, in contrast to many other European countries. Around 10 per cent of UK MPs are women, one of the poorest records in Europe. At regional and local level, proportions are higher at around 20 per cent of local authority councillors. These levels remain low, particularly when compared with Scandinavian countries, and there are few signs of improvement. For example, local government reorganisation in Scotland has brought only marginal gains for women in terms of council seats (Engender, 1995).

Within political science, the thesis further contends that fuller understanding of gender and political elites has been frustrated by dominant empirical approaches which focus upon measuring observable differences between female and male politicians.

The study aims to contribute to a broadening of the debate within political science by integrating parallel discussions which have been developed within other disciplines in social sciences and the humanities. The aim is to move away from a rather limiting way of looking at gender and difference in political elites and to develop underlying

concepts and theories around gender relations, political structure and political action. The work will draw upon contemporary debates around equality and difference, political identity, democracy, representation and citizenship. Recent suggestions with regards to political theories of care will also be examined.

The thesis uses the equality-difference debate, developed within feminism, as a key reference point from which to begin to explore how women understand their political role in elites, and their understandings of the ways in which gender intervenes at strategic, ideological and practical levels to impact upon their access, presence and agency within politics. It argues that the framework of difference opens up new directions and frees up the stasis which is present in the study of women in political elites. The study is also intended to provide one bridge between these debates and theories in the academy and the related discourses within political culture and feminist activism.

The study is qualitative and broad brush. It explores, through discourse and through contextual case study, several interconnected themes and issues. Its intention is to chart connections; to offer new interpretations upon women's experience in political elites and the significance of gender; and to suggest new directions. Categories have been kept fluid, analysis is thematic and conclusions, therefore, are necessarily provisional and suggestive.

Useful Knowledge

In addition, the thesis is concerned with the production of *useful knowledge* (Harding, 1987) for feminists and other women. The question of whether women politicians as women make a difference has profound implications for feminist strategy, at both practical and rhetorical level; and for feminist interaction with political elites and state institutions.

The women's movement in Britain, in contrast to the U.S. and Australia, has been slow to engage with the state (Eisenstein, 1991; Watson, 1992). This has reflected both the New Left 'anti-state' roots of the movement; and also the closed nature of British state bureaucracy. However the position has become more pragmatic and, since the 1980s, there has been an increasing feminist penetration of the state through political parties (Rowbotham et al, 1979; Wainwright, 1987), trade unions and the

state bureaucracy, particularly through local government women's and/or equal opportunities committees (Goss, 1984). British feminist activists in the Labour party have, during this time, reinvigorated separate women's sections within party structures, gained greater powers for the women's conference, and lobbied for quotas and targets to improve the representation of women as office-holders within the party and as candidates for public office (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). In Scotland, a loose coalition of political and trades union activists together with feminist groupings and other women's networks have mobilised around the campaign for equal representation in the proposed Scottish Parliament (Brown, 1996).

However, these strategies are fraught with difficulty. There have been considerable problems with justifying 'special' measures, to allow more women to gain access, within dominant political discourses and common understandings of fairness and equality. Some feminists have other reservations: firstly, that feminists who enter the state face pressures of co-option and incorporation (Parker, 1983; Parkin, 1992); and secondly, there is uncertainty about whether the aim should be to improve the numerical presence of women in politics; or whether the primary goal should be to increase the number of feminists? Many feminists have pointed to women politicians such as Margaret Thatcher and concluded that they would best direct their energies on other strategies of women's empowerment.

These concerns can be summarised within the following questions which are examined in this thesis: Is it reasonable to assume that women share common interests as political actors - or are common goals and concerns shared only by feminists within the system? Do women *qua* women make a difference - or is it only when women have a feminist analysis or work together in a conscious feminist collectivity that they have an impact in promoting positive change for women?

The study seeks to generate useful knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, by contributing to new versions of political discourses which will promote the greater representation of women in political elites, by finding new ways of discussing the inequalities which arise from the sexual division of labour. In particular it aims to further the project Anne Phillips (1993) has identified as 'making transparent' the needs of equality. Secondly, by understanding and identifying enabling conditions under which women politicians may develop gender consciousness and may act as

individual or collective agents or supporters of positive change for women. Thirdly, by indicating common ground between women politicians and feminist and other women's groups seeking social change.

Data were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews with 53 women councillors from all four major political parties in four Scottish local authorities. The study uses discourse as a window through which to understand how women politicians see themselves and their political role; and the context in which they juggle the meanings of competing concepts of equality and difference. As such, the primary focus of this study is upon the expressed understandings and opinions of women councillors. In addition, a case study was undertaken into *Zero Tolerance*, a radical anti-violence public awareness campaign which was common to all the authorities studied. Further detail regarding the methods employed by this study are found in the Chapter 1.

Getting There, Being There : Gendered Discourses of Access and Presence

The thesis is divided into two sections: Section I deals with issues of women's *access* into political decision-making assemblies, in terms of both practical and ideological barriers. It uses the narratives of women local politicians to examine the way in which gender relations shape and impede women's access to political elites; and explores the discourses and justifications offered by women politicians for their increased presence. Following Showstack Sassoon's feminist reading of Gramsci, it posits women's *common sense* discourses as valuable sites for exploring complex and contradictory understandings of gender and politics (Showstack Sassoon, 1987). The objective was also to place the narratives of women politicians within the context of contemporary theories and political debates about difference, equality and representation; and recent suggestions with regard to feminist political theories of care.

Women forwarded complex reasons and justifications for the increased access of women into decision-making bodies, including the assertion that women make a difference *qua* women. Unlike Scandinavia, for instance, where arguments for the greater representation of women in politics have been made on the grounds of both equality and difference (Hernes, 1987; Skjeie, 1991); in Britain, dominant discourses

of representation, equal opportunities and justice are rooted in formal 'gender-blind' constructions of equality. British feminist academics and party activists have similarly privileged equality discourses (Phillips, 1993). It is argued this strategy has not served women well in their campaign for equal presence in the polity, and has resulted in problems of legitimacy over the introduction and implementation of special measures, such as quotas and all-women short lists (Chapter 2; Chapter 4).

Women politicians in the current study had a clear understanding of the gendered barriers to equal participation in politics and perceived them as rooted in the sexual division of labour. The unequal caring burden was seen as inextricably linked with the resistance to change of male-defined political structures, and of individual men as political players, social actors and family members (Chapter 3). These discussions of gendered realities exposed the limitations of dominant constructions of equal opportunities and 'fairness' which have, to date, failed to deliver significant improvements in levels of women's political representation in local and national decision-making assemblies (Chapter 4).

The paradox of domestic and caring labour is that women politicians perceived it to be both a barrier and a resource. In particular women place a high value upon care as an idea and an activity; many argue that values and skills which arise from women's experience as carers are useful and desirable in local and national politics. Striking parallels were noted between the *common sense* of women local politicians and the practical insights of recent feminist theoretical contributions about difference, gendered justice (Moller Okin, 1989), maternal thinking (Ruddick, 1989) and care as a political ethic (Tronto, 1993) (Chapter 5, Chapter 6).

Women's discussions of their experiences within male-dominated political structures; and their deliberations as to the necessity or merit of various measures to improve access were placed within the framework of 'The Long and Short Agendas of Equal Opportunities' (Cockburn, 1989, 1991). In keeping with Cockburn's findings within various organisational settings, many women in this study showed distaste for 'special treatment'. Of those who backed quotas, few saw them as just rather than merely expedient. Many women, however, discussed the need for the Long Agenda, which Cockburn has characterised as the 'project of transformatory change'. In this respect, the proposed Scottish Parliament was perceived by many women to offer the opportunity of a new politics. The Scottish Parliament is seen as a long agenda

measure, that of a transformed political arena operating on a transformed political agenda which would promote positive change and would incorporate the values and concerns of women (Chapter 4, Chapter 6).

Section I concludes that new ways of looking at political activity and political values are found in incipient form in the *common sense* of many women politicians, feminist and non feminist, together with elements of hegemonic ideology which serve to obscure and maintain women's oppression and disadvantage. Their discussions of politics, representation and power contain an emerging challenge, in common with several feminist theorists. This is the potential to subvert dominant constructions of political criteria and privileged power forms by advancing alternative models based on women's experience and values, and a nascent political ethic of care (Chapter 6).

Making a Difference? - the case study of Zero Tolerance

The case study of *Zero Tolerance* , an anti-violence public awareness campaign, is explored in Section II. The campaign is feminist in that it names violence against women as a political issue, and uses a feminist analysis of violence and sexual violence as the male abuse of power. It has attracted considerable interest throughout the UK, Europe and the world. In Scotland, it has increased public and political debate about violence against women and children, and has raised the issue higher up the political agenda. The thesis documents an important development and also provides a focus for further discussion in the on-going debate in Scotland and elsewhere into the existence and nature of women's politics in action.

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is an ideal site to explore, in a real-life context, the theoretical expectation of certain feminist models that the feminisation of political elites (in terms of the increased numerical presence) will lead to the greater promotion of positive policies for women; an expectation which resonates with the perceptions of many women interviewed. It also allows examination of the hypothesis that there are structural factors which may inhibit or enable the development, expression and active pursuit of gendered politics. It investigates by what processes, and to what degrees, women politicians develop politicised gender consciousness; and to investigate under what conditions such common interests and identifications may form the basis for solidarity, political influence, or collective action which may be loosely characterised as 'women's politics'.

Within Section II, women discuss their own experiences, political aims and political behaviours. It examines what they say about their relationship with feminism and the women's movement, and political identity more generally. Although women councillors in Scotland do not generally identify themselves as feminist, many are 'pro-equality' and do act as agents or supporters of change. Women councillors from different political parties showed high levels of awareness of women's groups and women's issues, and support for equal opportunities work. There is also support, although in some cases highly qualified support, for the work of women's committees. This indicates a greater sense of cross-party acceptance of gender issues and equalities structures as legitimate within local government than has generally been argued. All but a few can be placed along a 'continuum of gender consciousness' (Chapman, 1986, 1987) and commitment. This ranges from a 'mild' or 'weak' political identification towards women, to the energetic promotion of women's interests as pro-active agents of change (Chapter 7).

Inhibiting conditions identified included: present political structures; party discipline; and the perceived political 'cost' of supporting gender policies, factors also highlighted in studies elsewhere (Carroll, 1984; Antolini, 1984). The relatively small proportion of women in the authorities studied appeared less significant than the *critical mass* literature has suggested (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988). Instead a more complex picture emerges where successful agenda setting and effective implementation of equalities initiatives is linked to a combination of enabling factors. In particular, the creation and maintenance of equalities structures are significant in providing both the organisational space and the political space in which to initiate change. Women's and equal opportunities committees have been a feature of local government in Britain since the 1980s. All participating authorities in the study had equalities structures in place, staffed by specialist officers. Almost all the women councillors interviewed - including those generally critical of women's committees - believed that the *Zero Tolerance* campaign would definitely not, or was unlikely to, have happened without the existence of an equalities structure. They were also convinced that their own presence as female councillors made a difference in terms of its success (Chapter 7; Chapter 8).

Zero Tolerance was a strong campaign initiated by feminist specialist officers and dedicated feminist councillors which found broad support from women councillors,

feminist and non-feminist, across party. Evidence from the case study suggests that feminists may be gaining some leverage from their intervention in the state through women's committees and women's units to control and define certain issues. Violence appears to be an issue around which women, political and non-political, feminist and non feminist can work together. Although support was not unqualified nor uncritical, it was unprecedented in the experience of local government gender politics; and was crucial to the success of the campaign. This indicates both the personal and political salience of the issue for the women councillors themselves, and also a recognition of its significance to women in the community. It also suggests that feminism has been successful in revealing the political nature of so-called women's issues such as violence, and that many women politicians share these newer definitions of what constitutes 'proper' politics. This is underlined by the findings of this study where there was consensus amongst female politicians across party, generation and degree of gender consciousness that tackling such issues and taking a moral lead were a legitimate part of local government (Chapter 8).

New directions?

The thesis concludes that gender intervenes in complex, contested and ambiguous ways for women in political elites. At a minimal level, almost all women acknowledge the political relevance of gender. There is some empirical evidence to back their contention that they make a difference. Although party remains the primary political identification for many, competing loyalties are evident. Most women politicians have at least a 'weak' gender consciousness which, in combination with certain enabling structural factors, can result in the promotion of gender policies. In the case study, this took the form of an emerging 'women's politics', a broad-based coalition which crossed traditional boundaries, and where women as women were successful at intervening in the local state and making a difference.

Women politicians also invoke the rhetoric of difference when discussing barriers to access and when justifying the inclusion of women in political elites; and their discourses contain a challenge to existing 'gender-blind' constructions of political equality and equal opportunities. Several possible 'difference' challenges to dominant ideology are discussed which may act to make the needs of equality more 'transparent'. These include: a re-characterisation of justice to take into account gender; a challenge to dominant constructions of political merit or criteria; and the

promotion of the ethic of care, which incorporates many women's values, as a political standard and an idea.

The thesis suggests that careful and selective use of some of these common insights; together with empirical evidence suggestive that the presence of women politicians has resulted in 'women-friendly' social policy outcomes; may promote re-invigorated discourses and political campaigning around women's more equal representation. Therefore, in terms of political discourse, it would make sense for feminists to make greater strategic use of the argument that we need more women in politics because they do make a difference. Furthermore, it indicates that there is common ground between feminists, within and outwith the state, and other women politicians; and that there is potential scope for productive alliance building around gender issues (Chapter 9).

Scotland - a moment of opportunity ?

This study is framed within a specific Scottish political context which differs from the overall British picture. Electoral support for the Conservatives in Scotland has declined sharply since the mid-1950s when they polled more than fifty per cent of the popular vote. By the 1992 general election, the Conservative share of the vote fell to 26% and just 11 Conservative MPs were returned to the House of Commons. At the local government elections held for the shadow local authorities in April 1995 the party's share of the vote fell to a fraction above 11%. The administrations of Margaret Thatcher and John Major have been markedly unpopular in Scotland and the most recent campaign for electoral and constitutional reform has grown in strength through the 1980s and 1990s. A situation where a party with a minority of support from the electorate can implement policies against the wishes of the majority of the Scottish people has given rise to a mobilisation of political and civic groupings to combat what is seen as a 'democratic deficit' (Paterson, Brown and McCrone, 1992)

In contrast, Labour is the strongest party both at Westminster, where in 1992, 49 out of the 72 Scottish MPs were Labour; and at local government level. David Denver and Hugh Bochel (1994) noted, in their analysis of the 1994 Regional Elections, that almost three-quarters of the Scottish population live in regions that have always been, or almost always been, controlled by Labour. Scottish political culture varies from the stereotyped white, male, workerist, 'wee hard man' macho culture -which

prevails especially in the West of Scotland - to more reformist and progressive cultures in the East central belt and East coast (Kelly,1995; Paterson,1993).

Alice Brown and others have charted the remarkable rise of activism amongst a broad coalition of women in Scotland around the issue of women's representation and constitutional reform; and the idea that women suffer from a 'double democratic deficit'; firstly on a general level because of Scotland's 'outsider' position within the British political system; and specifically as women because they are grossly under-represented within the power structures of political parties, and as elected members of local and national decision-making assemblies (Brown and Galligan 1993; Brown, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996; Levy, 1992; Breitenbach,1990,1995b). Catriona Burness (1995) has argued that gender equality has become an intrinsic part of the broader debates of democracy, accountability and representation in Scotland.

The Scottish situation is a context rather than a specific focus of this thesis. These conditions make the debate about women's access, presence and influence in politics particularly acute, and the possibility of real change tantalisingly close. Its distinctiveness means that it deserves special consideration, and thus the decision in this current work to confine the research to Scottish authorities. However general and useful insights about the experience and understandings of women politicians about their role can hopefully be drawn; as can lessons be learned from the 'window of opportunity' that the constitutional debate has opened up for more equal representation.

1 Background and Methods

Introduction

In this chapter, the background, the framework and the approaches taken in the thesis are set out. Firstly, the main research questions are outlined, together with the broad aims and objectives of the current research. A brief discussion of the place of the study of gender within political science is outlined; followed by that of the significance of the equality-difference debate as a starting point for the study. Difference is a confusing concept which is used in the literature in several, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory ways. Some definitions of difference are therefore forwarded, together with a discussion of the main usages of difference in the thesis. A brief overview of some studies of gender and political elites in political science follows. I will suggest that the dominant approaches of political science have been limited by their definition of difference as 'different from men', which has resulted in an emphasis upon attempts to 'count' and measure observable differences between female and male politicians. Conclusions are drawn as to the most productive approach to take in order to promote greater understanding. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the methods used in this study and its epistemological and methodological underpinnings.

Questions, aims and objectives

The central question of the thesis asks in what ways gender is relevant to women's experience as political actors in terms of their access, presence and agency in decision-making assemblies. It aims to understand the relationship between gender relations, political structures and political action at two distinct, but inter-related, levels: firstly at the level of discourse; and secondly within a concrete context.

It aims to explore differing political discourses relating to women's access to political elites, and their political role. In particular, it seeks to investigate the ways in which competing discourses of equality and difference impact upon women as political actors at both rhetorical and practical levels.

Secondly, it seeks to examine, within a concrete setting, the relationship between the process of the feminisation of politics in terms of the numerical presence of women, and the process of promoting gender equality in terms of social policy outcome. It aims to understand by what processes, and to what degrees, women politicians develop politicised gender consciousness; and to investigate under what conditions such common interests and identifications may form the basis for solidarity, for political influence, or collective action - which might be characterised as 'women's politics'.

Women, Politics and Political Science

Within political studies, much mainstream political science has been sexist in its approach to women's political role and behaviour, if indeed it has examined them at all. It has traditionally viewed women as apolitical (Lane, 1959), or having a narrow political competence based upon their traditional role within the family (Duverger, 1955). Women have rarely been the focus of traditional political science, and assumptions about the nature and meaning of differences in male and female political behaviour have been ascribed to women's different (and lesser) social role. Bourque and Grossholtz's (1984) critique of traditional political science's approach to the study of women's political participation has characterised it as one of sweeping assertions, sexist assumptions and 'fudged footnotes'. Much mainstream political science remains falsely gender-neutral, and assumes the experience of the male political actor to be the norm. There has been a general failure to accept the political relevance of gender, although this situation is changing largely as a result of the challenges of feminist scholarship.

Randall (1987) charts the growth in scholarship in the field of women and politics and states that it represents a tremendous advance, although some major questions are still unresolved. There are still problems of integrating this work within the discipline (Meehan, 1986; Randall, 1987), and political science has largely not recognised the challenge posed by feminist redefinitions of politics, despite a well-established and complementary body of work within political science exploring informal political processes, agenda setting and complex characterisations of power (Meehan, 1986).

Work by female political scientists , and other feminist scholars and activists outwith political science, has challenged commonplace definitions of the political and the proper focus of political study. This work has challenged the traditional public - private divide and, by broadening the definition of politics and political activity, has revealed the scope and variety of female political activity (Bystydzinski, 1992 ; Siltanen and Stanworth, 1984).

There has been criticism that a continued focus upon women in political elites is narrow and perpetuates mainstream categories in political science which obscure the level and pattern of female political activity (Bystydzinski 1992 ; Githens, 1984). However, whilst recognising the importance of women's political activity in all its forms, this thesis concentrates upon women's attempts to gain and exercise power in public decision-making institutions; and sees this work as valid and useful. Others argue for work which incorporates the best of both traditional political science and feminist challenges (Randall, 1987, 1991)

Equality and Difference

The equality-difference debate is a central tension within feminism and it is a powerful strand which runs through this thesis. As a starting point, or backdrop, it offers new insights into issues of women's access, presence and agency. It is relevant to the understanding of women's roles in political elites in a number of strategic, discursive, and practical ways.

Although the concept of difference has been debated intensively and contentiously within feminist circles, both in terms of women being different to men; and differences between subgroups of women, mediated by class, race and ethnicity, age and sexuality to name but a few; this debate has been less well rehearsed within political science and political sociology; and within contemporary political culture. However differing concepts of justice and equality; and the vexed question of difference are at the root of stances on representation, equal opportunities and women's programmes. For women politicians, it articulates some of their lived contradictions as women in politics and, as such, difference needs to be explored in order to understand attitudes and strategies.

The significance of equality-difference as it relates to specific topics is discussed in individual chapters. However, within this chapter, I will outline the basic parameters of the equality-difference debate; and give some definitions and usages of difference.

The use of the equality-difference debate is strategic. The debate exists on a multi-dimensional matrix, and there is no intention to intervene in a complex philosophical debate around intractable questions and issues. Instead the thesis draws upon the practical insights, of the debate, its potential implications and possible applications.

Different differences: feminist debates and definitions

Difference has been theorised in increasingly complicated ways by feminists over the past fifteen years. Three main senses of difference can be found in the extensive contemporary feminist literature: Equality versus Difference; Difference as Diversity; and Différance (Coole, 1993). The following account is brief and is based upon more complex and substantial discussions found in Coole (1993) and Evans (1995) and in collections edited by Bock and James (1992) and Rhode (1990).

Moller Okin (1990) notes that feminists have failed to reach any consensus on the extent to which they concede there are any significant differences between women and men; they differ in their views as to what any discernible differences may be due to; they disagree as to the relative merit - or hierarchical ordering - of any differences in, for example, modes of thinking or political behaviour; and they differ in their prescriptions for social change.

The emphasis on the search for evidence of difference or sameness results not from intrinsic concern with the issue of difference per se, but rather because of its implications for sex equality. Difference has potential consequences in the pursuit of equal rights, treatment and opportunities.

The predominant sense in which difference has been debated within feminism is that of Equality versus Difference. This invoking of difference as an opposition to equality has caused widespread confusion because it does not use the common definition of equality - that of distributional equality - which would suggest that the

opposite of equality was inequality (of rights and resources). Instead difference is posited here in opposition to an equality premised on sameness.

Formal equality is based upon universalism, and the idea of treating all people as if they were alike. Strict equality feminists argue that women do not differ from men in any significant way, their demand is for equality of opportunity to compete for social, political and economic resources; and their goal is for full inclusion of women into existing social, economic and political structures. Any differences that equality feminists concede are argued to be the result of sexual stereotyping and socialisation; and are seen as failings to be overcome. The male model effectively remains the standard and the paradigm. The onus is upon women to prove themselves 'as good as a man' and to fit into existing value-systems and institutions (Moller Okin, 1990:151).

Difference, in this context, stands in opposition to an equality which is premised upon undifferentiation. Difference feminists argue that sex difference, whether biologically-based or socially constructed, is relevant to issues of equality; and that 'gender-blind' constructions of equality and justice disadvantage women. It offers a practical critique of the shortcomings of formal equality which fails to deliver for women. Denying difference, particularly the gendered realities of women's lives, their reproductive work and their unequal burden of care for men, children, the sick and the elderly, leads to 'equality in form, not equality in fact' (Rhode, 1992:151)

Difference feminism also offers a critique of universalist paradigms; arguing that equality and justice are premised upon male needs and interests, which then appear as standard, natural and rational - whereas women appear to need special treatment. This critique is extended to whole systems of values and institutional structures, the implications, in particular, for equal opportunities and special measures, are discussed at more length in Chapter 5.

The debates around difference recognise women's gendered disadvantage; but there is also a strand which demands the revalorisation of values traditionally associated with women. For some strict difference feminists, concepts like equality are irredeemably male; and political, social and economic institutions inimical; and their strategy is separatism, building an alternative culture. However, other difference feminists seek to transform constructs of equality and justice to take

account of gendered realities; and to transform institutions by introducing 'women's values'.

The equality- difference debate is cross-cut with the inter-related concept of differences. The second broad usage of difference can be characterised as difference as *diversity*. Confronting and recognising the differences between groups of women has been an important debate of the 1980s and 1990s. The false universalising of a predominantly white, middle class, heterosexual women's movement has been challenged by black women and lesbians in the US (Lorde, 1984; hooks, 1982), and in Britain (Carby, 1982; Amos and Parmar, 1984); although Britain, with its tradition of socialist-feminism, has been more sensitive to the different class positions of women (Phillips, 1987). Feminism no longer claims to speak for Woman, but recognises that women have diverse experiences mediated through differences such as ethnicity, age, disability, class and sexual orientation. This debate both recognises the differences between women, and competing loyalties and shifting identities within an individual woman. It also recognises the oppression of other previously marginalised groups.

The recognition of, and theorizing around, difference as diversity has brought rich insights and has led to the cross-fertilisation of ideas especially within the equal opportunities movement (Cockburn, 1989). It presents strategic problems for political action, and the need to reconcile competing loyalties through solidarities and issue-specific alliances.

The third sense of difference is *Différance*. This is a code for post structural associations which go further than the postmodern diversity discussed in the previous definition, and instead play with a symbolic politics where the category 'woman' becomes unstable; and where the feminine represents instead 'heterogeneous and fluid processes excessive and subversive with representation' (Coole, 1993).

Usage of difference in the thesis

In the context of this thesis, the first two definitions of difference are of most concern. Estelle Freeman, in a discussion of feminist debates and tensions around

equality, difference and differences suggests that some theoretical discussions have lost sight of the fact that:

In a historical moment when the category "woman" continues to predict limited access to material resources, greater vulnerability to physical and psychological abuse, and under-representation in politics, the search for a theoretical transcendence of gender difference is difficult at best and frivolous at worst. (Freedman, 1990:261).

The first two senses of difference offer a critique of formal equality which is seen to fail to deliver equality for women, and other marginalised groups; and they argue for contextualised equality which takes account of sexual and other differences. The thesis also draws upon two other uses of difference. The first is the sense of difference as an autonomous rather than a relative concept. It is a label representing women's specific experience, rather than a description of women's degree of deviance from a male standard. This approach is exemplified in work by Italian feminists¹; and also in conceptions of women's culture, women's standpoint and women's politics which will be discussed later in this chapter. In the latter half of the thesis the strongest sense of difference used is that of making a difference.

The political relevance of gender: different approaches

Within the study of political elites, three main approaches to the political relevance of gender can be determined from the contemporary literature, which lead to different and contrasting expectations. The first approach can be characterised as traditional political science; the other two approaches are broadly feminist.

- Gender is not a politically relevant category: This approach is atheist and would contend that the issues and characteristics which divide women, for instance social class, life experience and political ideology are greater than the things which unite them. Politicians are first and foremost politicians; gender is a social, rather than a political category. This would appear to be the prevailing view of mainstream political science which results in an absence of focus upon gender .

¹ For discussion of pensiero della differenza sessuale , and further references, see: Bock and James (1992:5-7); Bono and Kemp (1991:14-20).

- Gender is of symbolic political relevance: this approach remains agnostic in terms of whether women will make a substantive impact in politics. Some equality feminists would argue that any observable differences between male and female politicians are likely to be transient as women become more like mainstream (male) politicians in terms of, for instance, educational attainment or patterns of labour market participation. This approach emphasises the symbolic importance of gender in democratic models of representation; and the rights of aspirant women not to be excluded from positions of power. This results in a stress upon the importance of recruitment studies which highlight the barriers and obstacles impeding women's access into political elites.
- Gender is of substantive political relevance. This approach suggests that the mobilisation and integration of women into political elites will make a substantive difference. Expectations vary, but include predictions of changes in the style of politics from adversarial traditions to more consensual and co-operative ways of working; changes in the content of politics where women are expected to mobilise the political agenda in favour of women's interests and previously marginal concerns, particularly social and moral issues; and thirdly, changes in policy outcomes which would progress gender equality and related issues; and lead to the creation of a 'women-friendly society'.

Empirical research findings: a muddy picture

Work on women and political elites at empirical level has tended to focus upon the causes of, and potential correctives to, women's under representation in political elites; and the search for concrete evidence of difference or similarity between male and female politicians in terms of attitudes or behaviour. This has resulted in an emphasis firstly, on recruitment studies looking at barriers to women's political participation and potential correctives. This work has greatly advanced our knowledge of the complex barriers which face aspirant women; although less progress has been made with remedies. Secondly, there have been a great many surveys of office-holders' and candidates' expressed attitudes and policy stances, and reported behaviour. Fewer political scientists have explored women's political role in depth ; or the way in which the difference and equality debate impacts upon both political discourse - and upon practice - and the relationship between the two.

The main focus of research in the field of gender and political elites in the UK, the US and Western Europe, to date, has been upon the under-representation of women in legislatures and other elected bodies. In Britain, for example, studies have discussed the obstacles facing women seeking to enter the House of Commons (Currell, 1974; Vallance, 1979; Hills, 1981; Lovenduski and Norris, 1989, 1995); the European Parliament (Vallance and Davies 1986) At local level, again the predominant focus has been on barriers to recruitment (LeLohe, 1976; Bristow, 1980; Hills, 1982). In these studies, the issue of difference has frequently been framed as an auxiliary topic.

Work on difference has been largely comparative and has been concerned with charting and measuring differences between male and female politicians in terms of expressed attitudes and observable political behaviour. This has involved surveys of political attitudes: for example surveys of office-holders by The Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) (1983); The British Candidate Study (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995); and Wilford's survey of politicians in Northern Ireland (1993). At local authority level, Barry (1991) has surveyed councillors in Greater London about their attitudes to, and relationship with, the women's movement; and Martlew et al (1985) surveyed Scottish activists and women councillors.

Several studies have explored the legislative behaviour of male and female office-holders. For example, Vallance's (1979) work on private members bills in the House of Commons; Norris's (1986) examination of voting records in the US Congress and comparative work in Western Europe (1985); Vallance and Davies (1986) study of the number of interventions/types of legislative activities undertaken by men and women in the European Parliament. In addition, politicians' perceptions of difference have sometimes been examined, for example Leijenaar's (1989) study of Dutch parliamentarians (Leijenaar and Mahon, 1992).

The majority of studies, especially in the US, have been quantitative in their approach, using survey methods to try and measure difference. A smaller number of qualitative studies exist including Jeanne Kirkpatrick's classic study of American female state legislators, *Political Woman* (1974); and in Britain, Elizabeth Vallance's study of women MPs, *Women in The House* (1979).

Findings from empirical work in the United Kingdom and the United States have been ambiguous and contradictory. In the UK, studies of MPs have yielded little evidence of gender difference in the House of Commons (Currell, 1974; Vallance, 1979). Although Hills (1981) found evidence that female Labour MPs were more radical than their male counterparts, and Norris and Lovenduski (1989, 1995) found female parliamentary candidates in the 1987 and 1992 General Elections to be more liberal than male; party still proved to be the strongest predictor of attitudes. Coote and Patullo, in an overview of women and British politics in 1990, argued that instances of women MPs working together within and across party groups were still 'straws in the wind'. At local authority level, Bruce found that women and men differed in terms of specialism ; women also more often ranked case work and service delivery above policy making than did their male colleagues.²

The picture in the U.S. has been similarly inconclusive. Some studies have suggested differences between male and female legislators or opinion leaders. For example, Norris (1986) and Welch (1985) both found that women representatives were consistently more liberal in their voting preference than men, although the differences were small . The Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) survey of US office-holders in 1983 found women had a different orientation to men on issues such as economics, war, nuclear energy, capital punishment and abortion and the equal rights amendment. Other studies have stressed the similarity in male and female politicians and opinion leaders in behaviour and policy stances. For example, Holsti and Rosenau (1982) found considerable similarities in the foreign and defence policy view of women and men in the American political elite. Thomas and Welch's (1991) survey of male and female legislators in twelve states found only slight differences in legislative behaviour between men and women and between women at different proportions of legislature.

Inconclusive findings have resulted in sometimes contradictory interpretations of the degree and significance of differences between female and male politicians. For example, Leijenaar and Mahon present an 'optimistic case' assessment of difference in their useful overview (1992); whereas the data, particularly from the American surveys is viewed with caution by others (Randall, 1991; Antolini, 1984). The picture which emerges is 'muddy' and does not enable greater understanding.

² Bruce (unpublished M.Phil thesis, 1979), cited by Bristow (1980:78).

In contrast, a clearer picture does emerge from Scandinavian empirical studies. Research suggests significant differences between male and female politicians in terms of interests, policy orientation and style (Haavio Mannila et al, 1985; Hedlund, 1988; Skeije, 1991a). Although Skjeie is careful to differentiate between what she calls conceptualisations of politics and political action. Other research, in both the United States and the Parliament of the European Community indicates, with certain qualifications, that female elected representatives tend to more often promote equality issues than their male counterparts (Carroll 1985; 1992; Vallance and Davies 1986); and that this proactive approach to sex equality matters increases as the proportion of female elected representatives has risen (Vallance and Davies 1986).

The measurement approach problems.

There are considerable difficulties involved in attempting to 'measure' gender difference in terms of both definition of difference and in interpretation of results. The lack of shared meaning is one very great problem at the root of work into difference. It is particularly difficult to assess how well existing indices used in questionnaire surveys measure gender differences rather than party differences. For example, in the UK, questions on equal opportunities and abortion which are part of existing liberal-authoritarian indices tend to be used to measure feminist identification; but work needs to be done to see if they really do indicate feminist orientation. The existing indices available will frequently result in the male Labour politician or candidate, who may be merely paying lip service to equality, scoring higher than a Conservative female struggling with definitions.

In addition, there are some difficulties with validity. The proportion of women politicians in several countries (particularly the US, the UK and France) makes any statistical analysis of uncertain value. Certainly no straightforward generalisations can be drawn from comparisons between more than 90 per cent men and less than 10 per cent women.

There is a failure in much research of both political attitudes and legislative behaviour to incorporate, at the design stage, the conceptual insights gained from critical mass or threshold theory developed both in North American organisation studies (Kanter, 1977) and in Scandinavian political science (see for instance

Dahlerup, 1988). This work highlights the potential impact of women's minority status upon their consciousness, behaviour and agency (For a fuller discussion of critical mass see Chapter 6). Therefore some surveys have failed to take due account of other possible institutional inhibitors which may shape women's legislative behaviour, in terms of what is either possible or politically expedient (Carroll, 1984). Nor have they considered how one can measure or take into account factors which inhibit or enable the display or development of gender consciousness amongst women politicians.

The factors inhibiting the display or development of real or potential difference are particularly acute in many political systems. Institutional rigidities within systems, ranging from strict party discipline at a formal level to hostile traditions and tactics at an informal level, may limit a female politician's capacity or opportunity to act differently. Where numbers are small at both local and national levels and where institutional inhibitors are high, we must expect that women politicians are unlikely to display marked difference to men; difference that is easily observable or measurable. In addition, whilst the political agenda is still dominated by men it is unlikely that there will be significant differences in legislative behaviour. Muted voices will be drowned out by the dominant language of party politics and malestream policy priorities. Questions asked by political scientists in surveys may not let women politicians (or women voters) articulate their own agendas. Political journalist Peter Kellner commenting on an opinion poll underscored this point:

We live in a world in which both policy and political culture are dominated by men. In some ways the surprise is not how feebly women are asserting their own agenda, but how strongly many of them - especially younger women - feel about issues that older male politicians (and, I fear, journalists) tend to ignore. (*Independent*, March 18, 1992)

This discussion suggests that the reliance upon quantitative methods may be unproductive. This is not to argue that questionnaire surveys are intrinsically flawed but, rather that they are sometimes used inappropriately (Marsh 1984); and that the 'aura' of authority conferred upon so-called 'rigorous' methods may obscure a priori problems concerning the questions asked, and the conceptual framework employed (Randall, 1991). Randall argues that some feminist political researchers, especially in the US, have selected methods which produce data susceptible to

quantitative analysis but, 'whose import is trivial or based upon simplistic assumptions when qualitative analysis would have been much more revealing' (Randall, 1991: 524).

A review of the literature indicates that a more productive approach would be to use qualitative research methods to produce rich, contextual and processual data which would explore how women understand their role and how they negotiate the meanings of gender relations in politics; and which would chart the interplay between inhibiting and enabling conditions and predict the conditions under which women politicians may begin to act in a different way - to find a 'different voice' and use it.

Comparisons : a flawed focus?

Furthermore, not only have inappropriate research tools been privileged, but the focus of many quantitative surveys in political science - the seemingly straightforward comparison between men and women - presents difficulties. This focus stems, in part, from the dominant empiricist approach in political science - which limits study to that which is 'observable' (Lovenduski, 1981). Although the measurement of behaviour is a valid part of social science, it can serve to obscure other processes. Not only are there the practical problems of validity in comparing minorities with majorities (as outlined above), but there are conceptual difficulties also. McCormack (1975) suggests that men and women do not share the same symbolic or structural political reality, and that alternative conceptual frames of analysis are needed which imply two different political cultures based upon their different experiences, socialisations and political opportunity structures.

At a more fundamental level then, the 'different from' approach fails to acknowledge that men and women may understand and 'do gender' differently at all levels, including politics. Gender is problematised for women in politics. They have to face the contradictions and consequences of being female and politicians on a daily basis. Women may choose to deny the relevance of gender, but they have to do so consciously; they have to take a position. Whereas, because politics is arguably premised upon male norms and values; and because it is also premised upon the caring and daily maintenance of male politicians being carried out by women; men are able to 'transcend' their gender. Male politicians maleness is

unproblematic in contrast to female politicians deeply troubling femaleness. This issue is discussed and developed at length in Section I of the thesis.

This would suggest the need to investigate the experiences of women, as a study in itself, as well as possibly an a priori to comparative work. Randall warns that :

There is a danger that if feminist social science is too exclusively woman-centred it could end up replicating the partial understanding of male social science instead of remedying it (1991:527).

However I would argue that there would still always be space for women-only or men-only studies. Indeed that they are justified in their own right because they allow in depth understanding of different gendered realities and are rich sites for the production of theoretical insights.

Qualitative work: some problems

Qualitative studies in Britain and elsewhere have advanced our knowledge of women's experiences in political elites. Studies have provided 'snapshots' of a range of views at a single time. However there have been limitations to some studies, because they have lacked conceptual frameworks within which the differences between women, and the absence or presence of a gender perspective, can be compared and analysed. For example, Vallance's (1979) typology of women MPs makes little attempt to address such questions as: are categories determined by an individual woman's sense of gender consciousness? How do they fit into traditional models of women's behaviour? Is there a sense of change over time? In contrast, Gun Hedlund's Multi-Dimensional Model provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding differences between women politicians. The typology incorporates individual women politicians' different gender perspectives with various preferred strategies of action and results in the creation of four prototypes: Community Worker, Party Worker, Outsider and Oppositionist (Hedlund, 1988). The interplay between inhibiting and enabling conditions, has seldom been addressed.

In order to promote greater understanding of the role of gender in political elites, I want to build upon work which is in depth and focused upon the experience of

women in politics and their understanding of their role; and work which has moved away from the limiting approach of 'counting' and 'measuring' to an approach which gives weight to the context, process and relations (Hedlund, 1988, Chapman, 1986, 1987).

Women's culture, women's standpoint, women's politics : strategic spaces

In general, women's politics are explored and discussed within the literature in relation to the ways in which they resemble or differ from men's politics. Alternative conceptual frameworks are needed, particularly those which emphasise the possibility of an autonomous content to women's political experience, in order to move away from this comparative approach. Concepts such as *women's culture* (Ås, 1975; Du Bois et al, 1980); *women's standpoint* and *women's politics* are useful constructs which help us to move beyond frameworks which demand crude male-female comparisons. They allow the exploration of the meanings of, and the commonalities and variations in women's experience, which may arise from their specific position as women - and relate further, in this instance, to their position as women in political elites.

Women's culture has a variety of contested meanings, but is used in feminist political science (Hedlund, 1988; Carroll, 1992) to stand for a core of shared interests, common values and patterns of interaction which arise out of women's specific position as a result of the sexual division of labour in society. Carroll, in particular, stresses that this notion of commonality is loosely defined, it does not need to be based upon essentialist definitions of 'Woman' nor does it assume that the experience of all women is the same. (Carroll, 1992:26).

Women's standpoint or perspective is a similarly contested concept. It suggests that specific modes of thinking, values and practices arise from women's distinctive experience, for example their traditional work, particularly caring (Rich, 1976; Massey, 1985; Noddings, 1990). In a departure from women's culture, women's standpoint and, more particularly feminist standpoint, makes explicit epistemological claims. Based, in part, upon arguments within Marxism, it is claimed that knowledge which emerges from such marginalised standpoints is superior to the knowledge which comes from dominant standpoints because it has had to negotiate different and competing realities (Hartsock, 1983, 1987).

Hartsock sees a feminist standpoint arising from women's marginal position and their material conditions. Feminist standpoint is seen as superior to the 'perverse' and 'partial' dominant ways of knowing; and is also posited as liberatory. At present it is peripheral, but if pushed to the centre, feminist standpoint could transform dominant discourses. Hartsock uses feminist, rather than 'women's', to indicate the achieved status of the standpoint; it is a mediated, rather than an immediate understanding and grows from insights gained from the struggle to change relations.³

Standpoint presents difficulties of both over-inclusion and exclusion. These relate to questions of whose standpoint, whose perspective? Do all women share the same standpoint, regardless of other differences? Surely that is an over-inclusive claim? If standpoint arises from 'women's work', do all women share the privileged perspective; or do only feminists have a standpoint? Confusion has arisen through some writers usage of the terms standpoint and perspective as seemingly interchangeable. However, Hartsock is clear that women's standpoint is a specifically feminist standpoint. All women share a *perspective*, which arises from strands of common experiences; but *standpoint* is 'a mediated rather than an immediate understanding' which arises from struggling to change social relations and to understand the world from the point of view of women, rather than the 'partial and perverse' perspective of men. Thus Hartsock would claim that standpoint arises from feminist consciousness (Hartsock, 1987:162-174). This has potential to be exclusive and excluding of 'ordinary women'. These are problematic issues, which will be returned to. In the thesis Hartsock's distinction is made between perspective and standpoint; and her claims are discussed and developed further in Section I of the thesis, particularly as they relate to the work of Sara Ruddick (1989) and Joan Tronto (1993).

Women's politics is another notoriously vague concept. It is most often used to denote the varied forms of women's political activity, which include grassroots activism and sexual politics. It is also associated with broadened definitions of power and politics and with the centrality of gender in political struggles. It invokes notions of women's shared interests, values and practices, and presents a challenge to conventional political paradigms (Diamond and Hartsock, 1981; Flammang, 1984; Ackelsberg and Diamond, 1987; Bystydzienski, 1992). Flammang is cautious

³ See Harding's discussion of Hartsock (1987:181-189).

about over-stating the distinctiveness of women's politics, but suggests there is a plausible case; and characterises it as a 'politics of connectedness' (Flammang, 1984).

All these constructs present difficulties, not least tendencies for their potential use in essentialist and reactionary arguments (Randall, 1987; Barrett, 1987) and an inclination to pay insufficient attention to the variation in the experiences of women from different races, classes, generations and sexual orientations. These problems are considerable. However the use of frameworks based upon ideas of separate realities provide strategic and conceptual space in which to explore women's experiences without their voices being obscured or drowned out by dominant discourses.

The approach adopted in this study uses these concepts in a loose and strategic way, whilst also mindful of the pitfalls involved. This use of difference then provides an important provisional space within which to systematically explore women's understandings of the relevance of gender in terms of their access to political elites; their presence within political structures and their agency. Categories were kept deliberately loose and unspecific. The purpose of the study was to provide an exploratory, broad brush account which traced common ground; and which highlighted a continuum of gender consciousness. The advantage of this approach was that it allowed nuances to be teased out. It allowed, in many cases diffuse manifestations of women's politics to be explored, and suggestions offered about its implications for collective action. Arguably as categories become tighter, and definitions more specific, more women would be excluded.

Methods

This section will outline some of the epistemological considerations and conceptual frameworks used in the research. Firstly, I will briefly discuss the way in which the literatures, both theoretical and empirical, are used within the thesis; and the desire to attempt an interactive relationship between the literature and the findings from this study. Secondly, the research tools employed will be discussed, together with the contexts of the fieldwork. Thirdly, some of the methodological and epistemological underpinnings of the study are discussed and finally some of the

issues which emerged during the course of the fieldwork and subsequent analysis are outlined.

Use of literatures

The research touches upon a variety of debates in a broad range of fields, therefore an exhaustive survey would be impracticable. Instead, I have adopted a selective and strategic approach to both my survey of literature review and my use of conceptual tools and theoretical insights. Yin (1984: 20) suggests that the purpose of a literature review is not to determine answers but to reflect significant theoretical or policy issues and to develop insightful questions. In the present study, the literature review informed the structure and content of the interview schedule particularly the work of Chapman (1986, 1987) and Hedlund (1988) part of each it sought to develop.

Theory and empirical findings have been used in two ways. In this chapter, some conceptual and empirical work is discussed which I have drawn upon to frame and illuminate the central questions of the thesis, and which inform the approach adopted in the thesis. These include the epistemological basis of the thesis and its use of feminist standpoint, together with insights from grounded theory. The heavy use of women's narratives is justified by those epistemological underpinnings and further conceptual tools gained from Showstack Sassoon's feminist reading of Gramsci (1987) which posits women's common sense discourses as valuable sites for exploring complex and contradictory understandings of gender and politics.

Selective literature reviews can be found in the following forms in all the chapters: Brief surveys are used to introduce specific topics and to illustrate main debates; and a selection from both the empirical literature and theoretical insights is drawn upon against which to compare and contrast my own findings.

As such, this thesis does not follow the template of an 'orthodox' thesis with introduction, methods, literature review, fieldwork findings, discussion and conclusions. It attempts to integrate and synthesise the material, partly because there is not a tidy central arching hypothesis nor a holistic unified grand theory; and partly, because of the desire to attempt what Jonasdottir (1988) has called *thick* research, which integrates theory with empirical findings. I have followed Lisa Heldke's 'co-responsible option' (1988) where theory is treated as modest, lower

case akin to recipes for practice and have adapted the recipe as I go. Some of that process is reported later in this chapter.

Field of study: Local Government

Local government was chosen as the locus and focus of the study for several reasons. Firstly, women elected members are found in greater numbers at local level than at national level. Secondly, women have a specific and important relationship with local government, as elected members, as employees, and as clients. Sue Goss argues that, 'Local government which intervenes directly into women's lives is an important site for struggle and change' (Goss: 1984:128). A third factor in the choice of focus is the interesting development in the pattern of feminist activity in the 1980s and 1990s with the creation of local government women's committees. Vicky Randall (1992) contrasts the 'gloomy picture' of complacency and indifference towards gender equality at national government level with this 'paradoxical and quite heartening development'. She suggests that women's committees 'have provided a real if precarious "window of opportunity" for feminism in these otherwise unpropitious years.' (Randall, 1992: 83).

In addition, there were pragmatic reasons. It was easier to locate and secure agreement to interview the whole of a chosen population at local authority level. The chances of achieving this in Westminster as a postgraduate without any special contacts would have been minimal.

As a specific focus of study, four Scottish local authorities were selected. Interviewing (virtually) all female members of the target authorities grounded the women within an organisational context rather than as atomised individuals; and allowed the study to capture a sense of process and of relationships between women. The authorities were useful sites to explore inhibiting and enabling factors including the growth of gender consciousness on a collective as well as individual basis.

For the reasons discussed in the earlier part of the chapter, the research tools selected for this research are qualitative, with the aim of producing contextual and discursive data. The research is primarily based upon intensive interviews with 53 female local politicians in four local authorities over a period of 11 months from

March 1994-February 1995. The semi-structured interviews were face to face and lasted between 40 minutes and four hours. They explored four main themes: women's political under-representation; the experience of being a woman councillor in male-dominated structures; political orientations and gender consciousness; and women's politics in terms of political issues and agendas, structures and policy outcome. Some further aspects of the interviewing process are discussed later in the chapter. A copy of a sample schedule can be found in Appendix A. Further details of the interviewees and target authorities is found in Appendix B.

In addition, a case study was conducted into the development and implementation of piece of policy which was common to all four local authorities studied. This approach allowed the individual narratives of women to be placed within a collective setting. Case studies are particularly useful at exploring, describing and explaining real-life interventions which are too complex to be readily accessed by alternative strategies (Yin, 1984).

The case study investigates the genesis and progress of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign, an anti-violence public awareness initiative which originated out of Edinburgh District Council in December 1992. The radical campaign, which uses a feminist analysis of violence as the male abuse of power, challenges commonplace myths and understandings of violence, sexual violence and sexual abuse. It has attracted considerable interest throughout the UK, Europe and the world. In Scotland, there has been increased public and political debate, and the issue of violence against women and children has been raised higher up the political agenda.

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is a case of feminist-defined policy successfully translated into practice. As a clear case of a feminist intervention in the local state it is of great interest. However it also fits within a wider framework, as an interface between feminist action, public policy and a more diffuse gendered politics. Therefore the *Zero Tolerance* campaign is an ideal site to explore the theoretical expectation of certain feminist models that the feminisation of political elites (in terms of the numerical presence) will lead to the greater promotion of positive policies for women. It also allows examination of the hypothesis that there are structural factors which may inhibit or enable the development, expression and active pursuit of gendered politics for women as individual or collective political actors.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews which formed the major data set for the thesis; briefings were also conducted with specialist staff and convenors of women's and/or equal opportunities committees in the four target authorities, and other key informants. A documentary review was undertaken comprising of council minutes and policy documents, *Zero Tolerance* campaign literature, and reportage in assorted media.

Frameworks

The study focuses largely, but not exclusively, on women politician's own accounts of reality and their perceptions based upon their experience and understanding of social reality. As such it can also be placed broadly within experiential/grounded theory traditions (Denzin, 1970; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973) which seek to interpret or explain the world from the point of view of a theory grounded in the attitudes and behaviours of those studied. Its focus is upon 'the social construction of reality and the ways in which social interaction reflects actors unfolding definitions of their situation' (Bulmer, 1984:12).

However principally this study should be viewed as a piece of feminist research (Harding, 1987). Its focus is upon studying women from the perspective of their own experiences as women so that they can understand themselves and their social world. It recognises women's experiences as empirical and theoretical resources and uses women's experiences as a significant indicator of reality against which hypotheses are tested. It recognises the plurality of women's experiences and the complexities of fragmented identities, whilst also acknowledging that its goal is to produce useful knowledge for women. It also acknowledges that research questions are conceptualised from the perspective and specific social location of a researcher. Therefore the research focus and the results of this study from someone from another perspective may well have been different.

Conceptual tools

Insights from feminism and grounded theory justify the focus of research on women's discussions of their understandings of lived reality. In addition, my approach is informed by Anne Showstack Sassoon's feminist reading of the Gramscian construct of common sense. In contrast to other interpretations which

characterise Gramscian common sense as a crude mirror of hegemonic ideology, she argues that Gramsci saw people's common sense discussions as containing not only elements of hegemonic discourses which perpetuate oppression, but also new discourses in the making, incipient and contested with the potential to challenge and subvert (Showstack Sassoon, 1987).

Showstack Sassoon states that Gramsci was most interested in the way people's everyday lives and material practices, 'simultaneously contradict elements both in their commonsense and in dominant ideas' and argues that these contradictions 'provide the space or the possibility for a political intervention to construct an alternative hegemony, an alternative view of the world.' (Showstack Sassoon, 1987:18-20). Showstack Sassoon suggests that women are well placed to 'read' or analyse changes with greater understanding-because of their multifaceted role in society and the contradictions they experience. Common sense is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The use of women's narratives to explore discourse, in this thesis, is based upon an understanding that because women as women have to negotiate contradictions in their daily lives, especially through their complicated relationship with both the public and private spheres, it is likely that their common sense discourses will contain seeds of alternative ways of knowing.

This conceptual framework, together with more general feminist considerations also informed the method (technique) used. The interviews were semi structured and flexible to allow women to have some input into shaping the agenda, and to respect the value of women's (sometimes) contradictory discourses.

Disorderly processes: the reality of research

The growth of knowledge is a disorderly movement. It is full of instances of things known and overlooked, unexpected emergences and rediscoveries of long known facts and hypotheses which in the time of their original discovery had no fitting articulation and which found such articulation only after a considerable time. (Shils, 1957:144 cited by Bulmer, 1984: 270).

The research was intended to be a process. Unlike the more purist in grounded theory, I make no claims to have set out with a blank canvas. I set out with certain

epistemological 'leanings', including a feminist standpoint. I set out with basic questions and with certain analytical tools, particularly the framework of common sense as a site to explore understandings. However the research was based upon the premise that it is a search for meanings and that concepts and hypotheses emerge in the course of research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The analysis of the interviews was informed by a recognition of embryonic theorising from below and the need for feminist academics and other women to work together to produce insights and shared knowledge.

This developed in a particular way in the course of the interviews. The interviews were organised around general themes, however an attempt was made to allow space for women to take the interview in directions which they thought were important. Time was however always a tension and a restraint upon the development of a 'co-operative framework' (Kelly, 1988). However this flexibility did lead to certain issues being highlighted in ways that had not been anticipated - particularly in the spontaneous raising of women's experience as carers as a justification for the inclusion of women in politics, and as a predictor of their impact upon the political agenda and political processes. Directed by the data, I went back to the literature and the parallels between the common sense theorising of women politicians and the work of care theorists such as Sara Ruddick (1989) and Joan Tronto (1993) have become an important theme in the thesis.

Similarly, it became clear as the interviews progressed that notions of femininity were important to women and had implications for their relationship to feminism and their preferred political strategies and *modus operandi*. This had not been an anticipated theme but was raised spontaneously and also grew out of other discussions. This resulted in the question being introduced in later interviews. Insights gained from these understandings are discussed in Chapter 7.

Issues of confidentiality

This research is, in part, based upon a specific and well known case study. As such, the four authorities involved have been named. Yin (1984) argues that anonymity should to be avoided in case studies because non identification eliminates important background material. The reader cannot relate to any pre-existing knowledge of the case study nor integrate it into an existing body of knowledge. In the case of this

present study, the origination of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign in Edinburgh and its development within the contexts of specific Scottish authorities makes Yin's points particularly pertinent.

A journalist by training, my preference was to have individual interviews 'on the record', but to honour any information given on an 'off-the-record' basis. The first reason is that true confidentiality could only realistically be achieved if all context was stripped away, which would negate the purpose of a study which sought to explore processes and interplay between relations, structures and actions within specific settings. In addition, once a decision had been made to name the authorities (which was inevitable given the distinctiveness of the case study) the women interviewees were at least partially identified because the 'sample' group was effectively the saturation population of women councillors in those authorities. As such, the pool of interviewees' names were already in the public domain, whether specific opinions are attributed to specific councillors or not. Furthermore, meaningful analysis of the data required the reporting of relevant variables such as the authority, age and party of woman councillors. This information is, in many cases, enough for an 'educated guess' to identify them - and not an issue for readers who have no local knowledge.

The material gathered from the interviews has been attributed in three different ways. Firstly, personally sensitive material and material specifically so requested by the interviewee is anonymous (within the limitations already discussed). In addition most of the discussion of personal experience of violence is anonymous. This has led to limitations in the analysis of this information. However the very high prevalence levels suggests that violence is a far more common experience, even amongst relatively privileged groups of women, than is publicly acknowledged, which is a salient point in itself. Twenty five women said they had experienced violence, sexual violence or sexual abuse; three others specified that they had experienced sexual harassment. Two women did not answer the question. Of those who said they had no personal experience; four had family members or friends who had experienced violence; thirteen had experience of dealing with victims of violence through their work or as councillors. In total 42 out of 53 councillors had direct or indirect experience of violence, sexual violence or sexual abuse. All quotes used in this way are followed by (Anon) in the text.

Much of the information and quotes used in the text has not, in the final version, been attributed by name, but by other relevant factors. The quotations are, in all cases (apart from the anonymous material discussed above), attributed by party. In addition, other information relevant to the themes being discussed is included where necessary, for example whether the interviewee was a feminist or a non feminist in sections dealing with attitudes to feminism and women's issues. Sometimes age or authority is included where this is felt to be relevant. Categorisation is part of the process of explanation and although subtlety has inevitably been lost, it has allowed more general themes to emerge.

In some instances, some arguments forwarded are attributed to a named interviewee. This allows the reader to follow a debate in which an interviewee may make several related points. It also allows a point made by an interviewee to be related to some relevant biographical information, for example, how someone's life experiences led to their involvement in politics. This form of attribution is used most often in Section I of the thesis. The name appears in the text and given a party reference following the quote and sometimes a title. In addition, in the case study, the convenors of women's and/or equal opportunities committees and other key politicians involved in the campaign have been named. Their stances are all in the public domain already with public utterances by the chief supporters and chief critics of the campaign.

Summary

In this chapter a brief overview of some of the political science approaches to the question of difference has been presented. It suggests that the dominant approaches in political science have been limited by their definition of difference as 'different from men' which has resulted in an emphasis upon attempts to 'count' and measure observable differences between female and male politicians; and in representative studies in terms of approaches which minimise differences. It uses the equality-difference debate as a starting point to explore the role of women in political elites and takes account of broader theoretical debates and ideological discussions.

This chapter justifies the methodological underpinnings of the study and describes the factors which have informed and shaped the research and the thesis as a whole. The thesis seeks to integrate and synthesise findings from the research data with

insights from theoretical and empirical literature in a number of fields. The research is premised on a characterisation of research as a process, a search for meanings, and an understanding that concepts and hypotheses emerge in the course of research. This resulted in an interactive process where embryonic theorising from below has been paralleled with practical insights from feminist theory. Finally some of the practical considerations of the research, in particular the issue of confidentiality was addressed.

In the following chapter the political and theoretical arguments around women's increased participation in political elites is examined and is compared and contrasted with the *common sense* discussions of women local councillors about representation, difference and equality.

SECTION I

Discourses of Equality and Difference

2 Representations and Reasonings

Introduction

Chapter Two deals with some of the issues around political representation; and the under-representation of women. The chapter begins by outlining some of the main meanings of political representation. One of the broad questions posed by the study of women in political elites asks why are there so few women in politics, however there is another question which is normative and asks why *should* there be more women in politics? This chapter examines political and theoretical arguments used to justify women's increased participation in political elites; and compares them with the discussions of female councillors. It finds that women local politicians forward complex understandings of representation, that incorporate notions of both 'standing for' and 'acting for'. The considerable difficulties relating to issues of group representation are discussed; together with contested understandings about different representative roles; and the limits of representation. There are limitations to the dominant reasonings which are used in the British context to explain why there should be more women in politics. In this chapter it is argued that these limitations arise from the reliance upon gender-neutral discourses of equality, in contrast to Scandinavia where the political *rhetoric of difference* is well rehearsed and widely accepted. In the current study, Scottish women politicians' own narratives reveal that they believe that women *as* women make a difference to the style and content of politics. This suggests that a broadening of the debate to include difference reasonings would resonate with women politicians.

Representation - A 'slippery' Concept

Representation is a confusing concept with multiple, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory, meanings. This lack of shared understanding or agreed definitions has led Iain McLean to remark that, 'representation is one of the slippery core concepts of political theory.' (1991: 172).

The question of political representation raises numerous issues, problems and paradoxes¹. They include such conundrums as : What do we mean when we talk about representative government?; In what ways are elected representatives representative?; Can anyone represent anybody else?; What are the limits of representation.?; Why do we talk about the low proportions of women in political elites as the under-representation of women?

Hanna Pitkin, in her classic examination of the concept of representation distinguishes between two broad meanings of representation: 'standing for' and 'acting for'. Therefore government is representative if its elected members 'stand for' (resemble) the community ; or if they 'act' on behalf of the community (Pitkin, 1967).

'Descriptive representation' requires that a decision-making body is a 'microcosm' of the population.(Pitkin, 1967, Chapter 4). This justification is based upon a simple premise that it is desirable that the constitution of a representative body *mirrors* the community it represents in terms of relevant socio-economic characteristics such as gender, class and ethnicity (Pitkin, 1967:61). Characterised by Putnam (1976) as the 'Independence Model', the demographic representation of socially and politically relevant groups is seen in the context of underpinning the legitimacy of liberal democracies. Conversely, the exclusion of any group from power is seen to be the cause for concern. As Anne Phillips observes:

The extraordinary mismatch between the kind of people who get elected and the gender and ethnic composition of the population they claim to represent remains as a serious blot on the practises of democracy. (Phillips, 1993:98)

No specific claims are made as to whether there is a direct correlation between the presence of individual members of specific groups and the representation of any group interests.

Pitkin comments that descriptive representation engenders two problems; firstly, that of which social characteristics are politically relevant and deserving of

¹ For detailed examination of the concept of representation see Pitkin (1967); Birch (1971); McLean (1991); Bognador (1985).

representation; and secondly, that members of socially relevant groups may not share substantive opinions. Representatives may not vote as the majority of group members might wish (Chapter 4).

The under-representation of women in political elites is thus characterised primarily then as concerned with the scarcity of women present in the system. Claims that this leads to an under-representation of the *interests* of women are less explicit, but are nevertheless present in many understandings.

The alternative of demographic representation is that based upon the 'principal-agent' conception (McLean, 1991). Bodies are representative because they are made up of representatives elected to 'act on behalf of' their constituents. McLean suggests that the common understanding of representative government contains both broad definitions, which may sometimes be in conflict with each other. In addition, any relationship between representative and represented is mediated by the party political system .

There are different expectations as to who can represent who, depending upon whether a 'standing for' or an 'acting for' definition is used. There are different conceptions as to whose interests a representative represents: those of the group to which they belong; those of their geographical constituency; those of their political party; or those of the community or nation as a whole? Definitions of the representative role of individuals is similarly contested. Wahlke et al's (1962) typology distinguished between several styles of representative in politics. The two main ones are delegate and trustee (1962: 272-280. Gross, 1978:259). A delegate regards her or his mandate as 'instructions from the community', while a trustee views her or himself as 'a free agent acting on the moralistic directives of his own conscience' (Gross, 1978:360). The relationship between type of representation (standing for and acting for) and representative role (delegate or trustee) is not clear. To summarise, any discussion of representation is necessarily complex and ambiguous. There is little consensus about meanings. Few definitions are watertight, they are neither internally consistent, nor self-contained; definitions leak and blur into each other. This has led S.E.Finer to observe, 'representation is a conceptual muddle' (1985).

The Justifications : Justice, Interests and Resource Reasonings

The inclusion of women into political and public life and decision-making elites has been premised on a range of contested meanings and reasonings about representation which have involved the claim of equality or the assertion of difference. For example, during the struggle for suffrage in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries women, and their supporters, used universalist notions of justice and equality to further their claims (Coole, 1989 and 1993); militant suffragettes also invoked notions of women's moral superiority in slogans such as , 'If Women Had The Vote, There Would Be No More War' (Rendall, 1987; Liddington and Norris, 1978; Jeffreys, 1985) These two strands of feminism, equal rights feminism and difference feminism, continue to exist as a tension in the contemporary women's movement and feminist politics. Gisela Bock and Susan James argue that the tension stems, at least in part, from a 'mutual insecurity' and the realisation that:

Both sets of ideas can be and have been used against women. Formal equality has all too often been defined in male terms and appeals to female difference or otherness continue to be used to justify the inequality of the sexes. (1992:3)

Contemporary claims for women's increased inclusion in political elites are based upon differing conceptions of political representation; differing ideas about the political relevance of gender; and differing expectations in terms of end goals and outcomes. Heje Skjeie (1991a, 1991b, 1995) contrasts *symbolic* and *substantive* characterisations of women's presence. The Symbolic ² presence of women is important in terms of signalling fairness and justice; democratic bodies are 'seen' to be representative and therefore morally legitimate; women (and other individuals from previously marginalised groups) are seen to have equal opportunity to compete for political power. The end goal is to increase the number of women in politics, there are no firm expectations as to outcome. This equates with Pitkin's notion of descriptive representation mirroring populations. Claims of *substantive* presence are based upon predictions that the inclusion of women (and other under-represented groups) will lead to the a change in political agendas and policy outcomes. The inclusion of women is a means to achieve another goal, that of

² Symbolic here equates with Pitkin's 'descriptive representation' and Putnam's 'Independence Model.' It should be noted that Pitkin (1967) and Birch (1971) both use symbolic representation to mean constitutional figure heads, for example the monarchy, 'standing for' the nation.

political and social change (Skjeie, 1991a). Norris and Lovenduski use the same typology but remain largely sceptical, in the British context, of a substantive outcome from the presence of women, arguing that party and generation are more important than gender in determining attitudes and policy agendas (1995).

Helga Hernes (1982) formulates three main categories in her typology of representation reasonings: justice, interests and resources. Gun Hedlund summarises them as follows: Justice reasoning is based upon women's right to participate in politics; the political outcome of participation is of less concern. There is also a 'fairness' aspect where the presence of women candidates is seen to signal fairness and a functioning democracy (Skjeie, 1991a); According to *Interests* reasoning women's interests are conceptualised as being different from men's and often in conflict, therefore women's need to act in their own interests is emphasised; *Resource* reasoning is based on the claim that women bring particular knowledge, values and skills to politics. (Hedlund, 1988:79; See also Skjeie, 1991a, 1991b).

The dominant discourse in British political discourse and within feminist activism around the issue of representation is one which combines the symbolic argument and the justice reasoning. Therefore the normative thrust to increase the number of women in politics is one based on justice (fairness, equal opportunity) and a sense in which local and national government should more closely reflect the social make-up of the population at large (proportionality). This conflation can cause some confusion although the two strands interweave, both relating in slightly different ways to ideas of equality, fairness, justice and representation. However, differing weight is given to the strands within this dominant discourse: political parties most favour the equal opportunity component; feminist activists promote proportionality.

Getting There : the reasonings of women politicians

In this study, the main justifications presented by the interviewees for promoting or supporting the greater representation of women in local government and national government can be summarised within three main categories, which broadly parallel Hernes, and which I characterise as: *Justice/Proportionality*; *Interests*; and *Resources*.

The first reasoning: *Justice/Proportionality* contains themes of fairness and democracy. There is assumed to be a normative thrust towards equal or fairer representation of women in political elites in terms of justice - or as an ideal. Because women make up 50 per cent of the general population they should make up 50 per cent of decision-making bodies. On an individual level it is a woman's right to participate in politics. A small number of women confined their justification to this point alone:

Women are under-represented, that's just a bald statement of fact. There are more men in politics than there are women in politics. I don't think it is an ideal situation. I think a more balanced representation is better in a democratic society - it goes without saying, doesn't it ? (Conservative).

Just as I think there should be more disabled people in politics; there should be more black people in politics; politics should reflect society as a whole and as women constitute more than 50 per cent of the community then there should be more than 50 per cent women represented here. I don't see any other way of putting it, I think we can justify the fact that women should be wherever people are. (Labour).

The next cluster of justifications centres on women as a specific social *Interest* group. Thus it is reasoned that women have interests which differ from, and can potentially be in conflict with, men's interests. Therefore women would be better served by more women representatives in terms of, not only identifying and giving political legitimacy to women's needs, but also in giving those issues greater political priority.

It would be ideal if the sex of representatives didn't matter - if women could feel that men would represent them equally well. But I don't think we are yet at that stage - that either women *feel* or that men *do*. There are many women who will vote for men, but I think there are very few men who will truly, honestly represent everybody equally and impartially - the partiality will be subconscious.[...] I don't think many men appreciate women's problems [...] a lot of them think women make a lot of fuss about nothing. (Liberal Democrat).

The third explanation is the *Resource* reasoning. It is argued that women have either general or distinctive skills and experiences to bring to politics, or a mixture of the two. The argument embraces both the 'special contribution' discourse, which claims women *qua* women have distinctive skills ; and the 'equal opportunities' discourse which sees the exclusion of women from decision-making bodies as a waste of the individual talents of able women .

I think women have a much better balanced mind than men in the main. Men seem to get stuck on a track and sometimes they don't appear to have much logic, they don't have the capability, the rationale - they seem to pick upon something and say, 'that's it , let's go with that'. They don't seem to see the benefit of debate. (Liberal Democrat).

[Women] have all the skills and the talents they need to be in politics - it's not as if they need to create them or learn more about it - a lot of women already have those skills. (Labour).

Many of the interviewees saw the increase of women in politics as providing a counterpoint or balance to men.

To give a mair rounded view of life, because I think women have different experiences from men and have different ambitions - am I being sexist ? I'm always having to ask myself that. As the mother of two teenage sons, I still think that there is a gender difference between men and women in a variety of things - just the different ways we cope with life - and so I think it's important that politics are *representative* politics, and go for a balanced ticket. (Labour).

However categorisation of answers is not straightforward. Few women confined themselves to *Justice/Proportionality* reasonings alone. Most women politicians invoked and interwove several strands of reasoning to create complex justifications for the increased presence of women in political institutions. Thus one explanation might contain themes of both equality and difference. Women argued on both gender neutral and gendered grounds. Reasonings frequently overlapped and could be open to a variety of 'readings' including traditional and feminist variants.

A further three 'composite' reasonings were introduced which I have characterised as : *Common Good*; *Women's Standpoint /Perspective* and *Style*. The *Common Good* reasoning contains elements of both the *Justice/Proportionality* and the *Resource* arguments. If *Justice/Proportionality* reasonings argue for an ideal in terms of democratic representation then *Common Good* equates to an ideal in terms of outcome. It argues that the increase of women into political elites will improve both political fora and political agendas, not for a narrow interest group, but for the 'common good'.

Many councillors were clear that men and women 'do' politics in different ways and that if there were more women in politics it would lead to a general improvement in

the way politics is conducted; and in the public perception and estimation of politicians.

Politics would be done in a different way if there were more women, and I think it would be a great improvement over the other macho puerile way in which politics is conducted at the moment . I think it is the way in which men do politics which puts a lot of the public off politics [...] Women don't do politics in that way - it doesn't mean to say that we don't have strong views about our opinions, or our determination to carry out what we feel is right, but we don't indulge in that sort of level of personal abuse. And I think it might well raise the profile, and the estimation of politicians in the public eye, if there were more women. (Labour).

These arguments invoke parity and difference, a women's morality, and a sense of common good and democratic renewal. It also overlaps with the *Style* and *Perspective/Standpoint* reasonings which are outlined below.

The *Interests* reasoning characterises women as an interest group. The presence of women is needed in decision-making bodies to represent the interests of other women. This theme is found in many of the women's interviews, however it is also commonly broadened out into a discussion about women representing other marginal groups or, indeed, previously marginalised concerns for whole communities.

I think there should be more women in politics because they represent, and are likely to represent, the views of women who are so many of the community. Things like, for instance, a road safety issue - it's very often women who are involved at that sort of community level because they see it as very important. It's very often women who see it on a day to day basis, they're the ones who are walking up the road to school with the kids. They see the dangers and they live it. (Labour).

Here, women's interests are equated with the wider issue of road safety in a community. In many instances women find it difficult to unpick women's interests from general care issues associated with their traditional place in families. Women often recast the argument to reflect the representation of the needs of a community rather than the pursuit of 'classic' interests. Women argue that because of their distinctive experience they 'see' politics differently and have different agendas and different political priorities. This can be argued to contain elements of interests and resource reasoning. It is commonly expressed as a *Women's Perspective* or *Standpoint*..

I think there is a fairly fundamental point [...]which is that it's not that women have separate issues, it's just they have a *perspective* on a whole range of issues which sometimes doesn't get a voice if you haven't got women being able to come together to discuss it. (Labour).

[Women] bring their own perspective to things and their own thoughts and their own experiences. They are different from men - whether the men like it or not - they've got a different approach and they're extremely energetic. (Conservative).

Interpretations of *Women's Perspective* and *Resource* reasonings have been used in the past to promote a limited role for women in politics. The predominance of women in 'soft' specialisms such as health, education and family policy in legislatures around the world has been widely noted (Randall, 1987: Chapter 3). To a degree, this containment of women is still informed by 'feminine ideology', the distinctive but narrow viewpoint and expertise ascribed to women politicians by political scientists like Duverger in the 1950s and 60s. Duverger contrasted the monovalence of women with the polyvalence of men (1955).

I think there is still that softness there. Well, women are the softer breed, aren't we? There's a kindness there - they can be *bothered*. I think that is still there. (Conservative).

Because I am a woman that's where my natural interests lie within the community - with the womenfolk. In that, I'm interested in child care; I'm interested in women at work [...] I would probably be more interested in roads and transport if I was a man. (Liberal Democrat).

Although women did, to some extent, accept they had a 'special' understanding of policy areas like, for example, Education and Under-Fives ; two major shifts in thinking seem to have occurred since Duverger's work: firstly ,women have challenged the under-valuing of so-called 'soft' specialisms or women's issues; and secondly, they do not see themselves as limited to any specialism, rather they see their experience and their 'perspective' as *transferable* to any policy area.

I think everybody will have their own interests, of course, and will have their own specialities. But I think women are just as able to be Chancellor of the Exchequer as they are to be the Women's Officer or the Minister for the Family or whatever. (Labour).

Labour councillor, Betty Paterson was the first female convenor of Tayside Region's powerful finance committee (1992-1994) and has proved herself in a

'male' area. However she does not see that women have to choose between 'sameness' and 'difference' ; she also sees the importance of women's experience in the traditionally 'soft' areas:

I do think being a woman can give you tremendous advantage on a Regional Council - dealing with education and social work. Women do have a unique understanding. They're the ones, usually, who go up to school, who get involved in their children's education, and they're usually the ones who are looking after elderly parents and things like that. So it really is important to get more women in to represent the people out there. (Labour).

Tricia Godman, a Labour councillor at Strathclyde Region, argues that women's ordinary lives give them an understanding of so-called 'hard' or 'male' areas - for instance, economics, although many women don't realise it.

It seems to me in the most simplistic of terms that if you have x number of pounds coming in a week and you've got certain things to do with it before the end of the week, then you certainly know a bit about the economy - I accept that's very basic. [...] I mean one of the pictures that we will all remember about the horrible Margaret Thatcher was her shopping bag and that screamed out to me that all those hundreds of thousands of women out there who say they know nothing about the economy do - and they do every time they step into a shop! (Labour).

In practice, many women's narratives contained elements of both traditional and 'transformed' thinking. Several women argued that the issue of child care is inextricably linked with economic development. They suggested that, if women chaired economic committees, they would transform the debate about child care and transform the agendas of 'hard' policy areas.

A shift in perspective is needed [...] It's like [men] not understanding that the child care issue is actually an issue that the Industrial Development Committee should pick up because it's one of the major barriers to economic regeneration. But it gets stuck inside education as a social issue, instead of being put into 'hard' issues of money. Whereas, in fact, if you developed the argument sufficiently then people would see that it belonged - but you would have a hard job selling that politically [...] I think a woman chair of EIDC [Economic and Industrial Development Committee] would make an interesting change in the agenda! (Labour).

The perception is that because you're a woman, you'll automatically be interested in Pre-Fives and the 'softer' options in policy terms here - and in fact I'm most interested in economic development and people go, 'Oh, *really?*'. And they fail to make the connection between freeing up, if you like, 50 per cent of the workforce with proper and adequate child care - which also doubles as a

boost for children going into education already prepared in a way that they're not at the present. (Labour).

The last major reasoning is the *Style* or behaviour justification. This reasons that women, by virtue of either nature or social and cultural conditioning, have a different style, a distinctive *modus operandi* which, if brought into politics, would result in less formal and hierarchical, less status-seeking ways of 'doing' politics and would lead to a greater emphasis, for example, on consensus and consultation. This shares themes with *Common Good*, *Resources* and *Standpoint/Perspective* reasonings.

I think women have a more civilised way of behaving towards people, listening to people and talking to them - rather than shouting at them - and discussing things. The area I represent is also represented by two Tory women councillors and I can communicate perfectly all right with them - although come the elections we will be fighting opposite sides. But I can still talk to them and, where action needs to be taken for the benefit of constituents by all of us, we are able to take action together for the good of the public, if you like, rather than feeling it always has to be some sort of political slanging match and that the public don't really matter. (Labour).

I think on the whole, and it is dangerous to generalise, but on the whole men enjoy confrontation and conflict and women, on the whole, prefer to operate in a more co-operative way. (Liberal Democrat).

Although one Conservative councillor sounded a word of caution about the claim that women are more consensual.

Yes, I suppose they are a bit more informal, I think that's right - but then remember, women tend not to say things absolutely outright, and it sounds consensual - but they say a lot of things behind the scenes and that is less helpful. I think men are more direct. (Conservative).

An interweaving of all these reasonings combines to promote a majority view within the interviews that women's presence in political elites would change the political agenda and have an impact on policy. In general, younger women and Labour women were more likely to support this view and older Conservative women were the most sceptical.

One of the examples is the Child Support Agency - if there had been more women in Parliament there's no way the Labour Party would have just allowed that to go through. We'd have opposed it because women would have known what the experiences of other women are, on child care, on poverty, on housing. Women have got a different perspective to bring. (Labour).

You would get different policy areas being regarded as more important [...]Third World policies - I think there are [...] lot more women actively involved in those things and I think that [development] is an issue which would gain more prominence in all the parties; environmental issues too.(Liberal Democrat)

I think what it's about is that you know that there are inequalities around of all shapes and sizes and you should be doing something about that, and women can do it because women use the health service more than men - by the very fact that they are women and they've got kids. They use the education services, the DSS, in a much more comprehensive way than men do. So they have - if you like - a *coal face* first-hand knowledge of all of those services which [...] are being very quickly eroded. We have to have something to say and we should be able to have a platform to say it. (Labour).

Around a half of all interviewees cited reasons of perspective (47%) or interests (47%) with justice reasonings cited by 43%, and resources by 41%. Reasonings which fitted into the Common Good category were mentioned by 26% and 30% specifically mentioned points of style at this stage.

Table 2.1: Reasons stated for women's greater political representation

Reason Stated	No.	%
Fairness/Democracy	23	43%
Common Good	14	26%
Representation/Interests	25	47%
Resources	22	41%
Behaviour/Style	16	30%
Perspective	25	47%

Categorising answers was not simple, frequently narratives were multi-faceted and sometimes contradictory. It must also be noted that beliefs about the potential

impact of (greater numbers of) women in politics and observations drawn from the everyday practice of female politicians frequently intertwined in interviews - and sometimes led to deeply contradictory answers. Several women eschewed the relevance of gender when discussing recruitment. For example:

I would like to see more women in politics, but I would like to see them for their ability *not because they're women..* [my italics] (Labour).

However when asked directly why there should be more women in politics, the following quote (taken from the same interview) was not untypical.

Because I think we've got a lot to offer .We have a different insight into life, we have different problems, I think *we're able to relate to women and the problems they have and the problems with child care* .
[my italics] (Labour).

Several discussions emphasised equality reasonings and women's need to get elected on the same terms as men - the merit argument. However they also invoked difference, in this case in terms of both interests (ie women's problems and child care) and perspective (a different insight). Similarly several women, in principle, espoused gender-neutral reasonings, that is equality or 'sameness' arguments; however when discussing the daily practice of politics underscored the relevance of difference in terms of behaviour, or political agendas or policy development. The faultlines of internal contradiction were particularly clear in some interviews, but most women interviewed struggled with competing notions of equality and difference.

Women's Political Representation as an issue: A sense of connection?

Antolini suggests that one of the ways in which women politicians have a distinctive politics is in their sense of connection to other aspirant women. In her survey of women in local government in the United States, she found that most women are concerned with the scarcity of women in political life and tend to fault the political environment, rather than individual shortcomings for the barriers to success (Antolini, 1984:37; Merritt, 1980; Mezey, 1980).

The issue of women and representation is a pertinent one to politicians across party in the current study. All political parties have, at a rhetorical level, publicly supported the idea that there should be more women in politics at all levels.

However, programmes of action adopted by parties have varied according to commitment and political ideology. Party response is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

In the study there were high levels of support for the greater presence of women in political elites; with the issue of representation seen as significant on a majority of women's personal political agendas. In general, the issue had the greatest salience for Labour women, a greater proportion of whom are actively involved in promoting representation. This indicates the high level of internal debate experienced within the Labour party at national (British) and Scottish level. A significant proportion of Liberal Democrat women are supportive of change, with smaller proportions of Conservative and Scottish Nationalist councillors perceiving under-representation as a priority issue.

The majority of women councillors also believe they have a personal responsibility, with varying degrees of commitment and activity, to encourage other women to seek political office. Consensus however breaks down over what kind of action is desirable or necessary to achieve greater representation, with the implementation of measures such as quotas viewed as an issue of contention.

All the women councillors were asked whether they thought there ought to be more women in politics. An overwhelming majority of women felt there should be more women in politics (84%). Only seven women (14%) answered differently, for instance:

There should only be more if they're capable. (Scottish National).

I would like to see - rather than should be. But then I would like to see broader representation of men as well [...] in terms of occupation, background, age. (Liberal Democrat).

Furthermore just over half of the women politicians (57%) believed they had a personal responsibility to encourage other women into politics:

I have always encouraged other women whenever I can. I tell them, 'If I can do it, you can do it.' I'm an ordinary woman. I haven't had a good education and they can see me and think, 'If she can do it, I can do it.' (Labour).



A further 24% accepted they had responsibility with certain provisos and qualifications:

I'm not going to beat the drum and say, 'Come here and we'll have a talk about entering politics!' But if I come across people who I think just need a bit of encouragement, or the right sort of words, yes - I would do that. (Liberal Democrat).

There were a small number of women who did not engage with the representation debate .

The issue of women in politics is not at all important to me. What is important is decent representation of the population, competent government of the country, taxation, value for money and healthcare. They matter to me more than whether there are men or women MPs. Undoubtedly there are women who are very good. Maggie is a case in point - though it depends on your viewpoint as to what she achieved. (Conservative).

I'm not here to represent the women in my constituency or the women in [the city] anymore than I am here to represent the men. I think it is something that is pushed on us frequently - it's expected of us by [...] the feminists.[...] Women in the community think we're more sympathetic, but at the end of the day sex shouldn't come into it at all. (Liberal Democrat).

However the debates around representation were seen as legitimate and important to all but a handful of women interviewees.

Symbolic Justice versus Group Representation: Safe Sailing on Troubled Waters?

Although feminist political scientists and political activists do acknowledge a variety of reasonings to promote and progress women's increased access to political elites, in Britain they have privileged the 'justice reasoning'; based upon notions of (individual) fairness and representative proportionality, in preference to justifications which stress women's different interests or different contribution. This fits in with dominant notions of gender-neutral equality in British political culture. It is a conscious political strategy and is seen as the most straightforward way to argue and most acceptable to men and non-feminist women. For example, democracy theorist Anne Phillips argues:

The case can be quite adequately prepared in terms of political equality or justice without getting into more troubled waters of representing group interests and concerns. (Phillips, 1993:138)

In her essay 'Democracy and Difference' (1993), and elsewhere, she argues in favour of mechanisms to ensure the equal numerical presence of women and men in all public decision-making bodies, but she does not base her argument on 'any substantial notion of representing women'. (p.92). Indeed she continues:

The argument is not strengthened - if anything it is weakened - by the more substantial notion of representing a new constituency or group. Accountability is always the other side of representation, and, in the absence of procedures for establishing what any group want or thinks, we cannot usefully talk about their political representation. (1993:99)

Thus claims that extend beyond the symbolic presence of women; those which more directly argue that women may 'act for' women rather than merely 'stand for' them, are seen as fraught with difficulty. The practical and democratic difficulties inherent in group interest representation lead Anne Phillips in a careful and nuanced argument to caution against claims of group representation. She argues, on democratic grounds, that the institutionalisation of group identities or interests leads to a 'freezing' of identity; to hostility and to a closure which can prevent the possibility of wider solidarities and more inclusive versions of citizenship. On practical grounds, she argues that there are intractable difficulties inherent in group identity. For instance, how do people choose between their different (and shifting) identities and group loyalties, for instance when sex, race and class intersect, to decide which group they belong to? Furthermore she argues that no effective mechanisms exist for establishing what constitute group interests and lastly 'the almost impossible task' of ensuring group representatives are accountable to their groups (Phillips, 1993:14, 97-99).

It is hard to see what counts as 'representing' a group. For there are few mechanisms for establishing what each group wants. We cannot say, for example, that getting more women elected to local or national assemblies therefore secures the representation of women. Politicians are not elected by women's constituencies, and apart from canvassing opinion within their own parties and perhaps consulting their own coterie of friends, they do not have a basis for claiming to 'speak for women'. (1993:97-98).

Indeed some of these difficulties have been encountered in practice by early local government Women's Committees' experiments in group representation, when small well-organised groups managed to gain disproportionate influence (Coote and Patullo, 1990: Chapter 15). Phillips' arguments are formed as a critique of Iris Marion Young's influential demands for the institutionalised representation of a wide range of oppressed groups within the context of American politics, including women, blacks, Hispanics, lesbians and gay men, the poor and the disabled (Young, 1989, 1990).³ Phillips prefers the strategy of equalising political access *as individual members* of disadvantaged groups.

Overlaid over these practical and theoretical difficulties is the problem of the issue of particularity in current political 'rules of the game'. Gender is only partially recognised as a legitimate political cleavage in British politics. Notions of formal equality - and equal treatment - are the political and legislative framework in which gender, and indeed race, issues have been mediated. Thus political discourses have largely been centred on equality as assimilation, with male, white norms taken as the standard. The problems of raising group concerns in the face of accusations of sectionalism are highlighted particularly by Hilary Wainwright (1987) who charts the opposition of the Labour Party to those advocating black sections and women's sections in the 1980s. Joni Lovenduski (1993) also notes that feminists active in political parties have had to recast women's issues as universal issues in order to avoid charges of sectionalism (1993:5).

However it is clear from the preceding discussion that characterisations of difference are frequently invoked in common sense discourse. Furthermore strands of equality and difference are frequently inter-twined in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. For example, it is clear that at popular level the proportionality argument carries implicit messages that the presence of previously marginal groups *will* have an impact on the promotion of group interests. Thus, as a popular discourse, *Justice/ Proportionality* arguments can overlap with an *Interest* group reasoning and therefore they lose some of their attraction as the 'safe option' of representation formulations. However, Phillips indeed raises interesting questions about the contested meanings of 'representation'. Elsewhere others, including

³ For detailed discussion of group representation argument see Iris Marion Young (1989, 1990.) See also Judith Evans' critique (1995: Chapter 8).

Pringle and Watson (1992) have discussed the complexity - or indeed utility of any unified notion of 'women's interests'.

Women representing women?

The contested meanings of representation; and controversies about who can represent whom, and how, are explored in various ways within the interviews. One Conservative councillor's concerns result in a scepticism of notions of women's representation beyond the purely symbolic. Beth Brereton dismisses the claim that women can represent women *qua* women, 'I don't believe it for a minute'. Her scepticism is also directed at non-critical claims about the representation of ethnic minorities:

There's no reasoned argument [for a gender balance of representation] as far as I can see - just symbolic importance. The same as with your ethnic communities - ideally you have the same ratio and balance of representation there. But that doesn't mean that a Pakistani can represent an Indian. (Conservative).

Few women were prepared to uncritically embrace the category 'Woman', and were clear that women are also divided by other factors such as class, race, ethnicity, religion, age - and in the case of female politicians, political party. Most women were careful to emphasise the complexity of identity and interests. For instance the interaction of class and gender .

It's doon to class again [...] It's ordinary women, working class women. It's the poverty o' their lives, the poverty o' their experiences, their economic poverty, their housing poverty, their emotional poverty. The fact they cannae afford to take their bairns up toon to the pictures - simplistic stuff like that [...] But it's those people's lives, and those women's lives whose experiences are not being articulated and are being forgotten about. (Labour).

A number of women felt uncomfortable with the assumption that *all* women represented women better than men. In particular Margaret Thatcher was singled out as an example of a woman who had done little to represent women's interests, 'an aberration'. Women argued against simplistic assumptions that women politicians straightforwardly represent women's interests, 'the follow on to that would be that men can only represent men'. However there were difficulties in how far to invoke or deny 'distinctive experience'. Some women saw the issue, neither in

terms of symbolic equality nor a direct matching of group representatives with interests, but rather a presence which would inform a notion of 'general thinking.'

I think because people are so complex that it can't be kind of, ' Oh, there are fifty-fifty [women and men] we'll have to have fifty-fifty representation ' - I think that's too simple. But I think there does need to be enough people involved to give a feeling of how women would react and how women would view a certain situation, so we do need some kind of representation. (Labour).

Others, again mostly Labour women, were prepared to argue that women in general did share commonalities with other women - or could form solidarities, a theme which is developed in Section II of the thesis.

Women are more in tune with what other women are looking for no matter what their political beliefs or political make-up, so I think, in general, I would say yes. (Labour).

There are people , younger women, in the Liberal Democrats who I'd be quite happy to work with anytime; there are certainly women among the Militants who I'd be quite happy to work with; I don't know any women among the Scot Nats but certainly I think there have been women, younger women as well, that I think would work more for the community rather than for themselves. (Labour).

Several women usefully discussed differing conceptions of representation, both the need for individual representatives to understand, if not experience, the issues in their constituents lives; and the need for representative bodies to contain as wide a variety of people as possible. Susan Dalgety, a community activist on a peripheral housing scheme on the outskirts of Edinburgh, editor of the community newspaper, and Labour councillor spoke about her reaction when a local politician, attending a meeting about poverty, asked what a power card was.

In an area like [this] where fuel poverty is a huge issue [...] practically everyone uses a power card because it is the only way they can cope with their fuel debt [...] His lack of insight into the experiences of the people he was representing filled me with horror - how can he purport to represent thousands of people when he is not understanding what their lives are about ?

But then I'm *not* saying that everybody has to be poor to understand what it is like to be poor because that's just a silly notion. You need a wide range of people because society is made up of a wide range of people . You need your occasional barm - and you need your personalities, your intellectuals. You need your organisers, you need a wide variety of skills and personalities, I think, to give a balanced group and a balanced government - or else it would all be really boring if we were all Tony Blair.

Women representing Women's Interests?

Further following Hedlund (1988) all the women councillors were asked whether they agreed with the view that women politicians represent the interests of women in the community better than men do. In Hedlund's study 83% of female councillors thought women did represent other women better; with seventeen per cent disagreeing. The Scottish findings are less clear: only 49% agreed, although a further 29% agreed with certain qualifications and reservations. In total 78% wholly or partly agreed; 18 % disagreed and 4% were unsure. The difference may stem in part from the different ways in which the studies were conducted. Hedlund used a questionnaire which therefore would not reflect shades of opinion picked up in the semi-structured interviews used here.

Table 2.2: Do you agree with the view that women politicians represent the interests of women in the community better than male politicians do?

	Swedish study	Scottish study
Agree	83%	49%
Agree-qualified	-	29%
Disagree	17%	18%
Don't Know	-	4%

Sources: Hedlund(1988); Mackay (1996)

In addition a number of women discussed the perceptions of women in the community who saw women councillors as having a special responsibility as women to represent them. Many interviewees commented that women from outwith their wards came to their surgeries for help 'because you're a woman, you'll understand'. This included one councillor who objected to the idea of being perceived as in any way representing women because she was a woman.

What I have found is that people come to my surgery and I say: 'Have you approached your own councillor?' and they say to me: 'Oh, he's a man and I can't really sit down ' [...] It's different expectations - that's where I have this conflict - it doesn't always work because you're a woman - but people's *perception* of it is because you're a woman. You can get as many women who would not be any more open or able to discuss things, but the perception of the public is - it's a woman, therefore she'll understand. (Liberal Democrat).

This suggests that the idea of a special 'constituency of women' which women MPs discussed in Vallance's study in the late 1970s also resonates with women in local government in the 1990s. Most female parliamentarians in the 1970s were loathe to identify themselves with women or women's interests (Vallance, 1979; also Currell, 1974).

The women are too interested in and too divided by politics to contemplate any kind of corporate identity (Vallance, 1979:96).

However Vallance noted that, although the women MPs were reluctant, they did concede that many women *believed* they were more likely to represent women's interests than their male counterparts and that they, as such, had two constituencies - a geographical constituency and a more general *constituency of women*. They also agreed they were more likely to act than their male colleagues if sex equality issues arose.(1979:83-90) The responsibility to raise equalities issues is also commented upon by women councillors.

You have to accept that as a woman - there aren't that many of us - so when women's issues are discussed, then you do feel that you have to be kind of representative and think about how it affects other women - the women you meet in the playground, for example and how it would affect them.[...] So you take on that responsibility as well. (Labour).

This acceptance by practitioners - that is women politicians - of a constituency of women, shifting and partial though the definitions are, is in contrast to Anne Phillips' tendency to foreclose the discourse of group representation (1993).

Women representatives - a distinctive role in politics?

Margaret Smith a retired community worker and Labour councillor in Aberdeen goes some way to answering the difficulties in the group representation discussions. She argues for equal representation partly on the grounds of justice.

Partly from simply the equality point of view - that half the population are women therefore half the people representing them should be women. That's my first and simple answer, frankly in lots of arguments that could just stand.

In a discussion which parallels Phillips (1993) she sees the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies as a serious problem for democracy which raises awkward and crucial questions about the distribution of power.

The minute you find that in a population where the gender is fairly equally distributed, yet when you get into power - which is politics - that it's largely dominated by one group then you have to start thinking about that : What does power mean? What do men mean by power ?

The speculation about whether women *qua* women would make a difference to politics will remain conjecture, she argues, unless women actually begin to gain entry in significant numbers.

What would going into politics mean for women? Would it mean taking on the power play that men do? Or would it mean exercising power in another way ? But its quite clear to me that women can't to it at all unless they're there.

In terms of representation, Margaret Smith goes on to forward a nuanced argument which invokes difference in several ways. Firstly she argues that, in general, a woman is more likely to understand women's concerns and interests. However she sees this as an argument fraught with difficulty.

It brings up the really hoary question about what representation means at all. Frankly, I just think that politicians can only represent themselves and they're really on a loser claiming to represent much more than that. But at least if I pontificate about what women are thinking and feeling and what they might like, I suspect I'm more likely to be right than a man is.

But the main plank of her reasoning is the different *modus operandi* and different structures privileged by women politicians, which arise as a result she believes of

both female politician's distinctive experiences *as women* - and their appreciation of the differences *between women*.

My main aim in structure is consultation, proper meaningful consultation. I think women are prepared to spend longer getting decisions than men are - none of this 'wham bam' rubber stamp. And that is because women are aware that every other woman is an individual and she needs to be consulted. They're not just a mass [...] Women want to be consulted, women are individuals, women have their own views on things. That leads me to look at a system of consultation far beyond what we do at the minute [...] Basically as a woman, even at its lowest level, she is slightly more likely to understand. I think a woman is likely to have a philosophy of: 'Well, don't ask me what women are thinking - ask them!'

The issue of structures will be developed more in the next section where, for example, experiments in popular consultation which is promoted in feminist thought and practised by some of the equalities structures. But the strand developed by Margaret Smith and others suggests that a *Woman's perspective* might lead to a preference for structures which consult and incorporate previously marginal standpoints. Her colleague at Aberdeen, Yvonne Allen, underlines the point:

If there were more women in politics it would be a lot more accessible [...] The amount of people I see in the streets and I say: 'There's something that will interest you, come into the council'. And they say: 'I cannae do that'. I say: 'Of course you can, it's your council!' I think women would promote that more[...] The attitude of *open door* politics - that's the way democracy should be. (Labour).

The link between feminist structures, such as local government women's committees, and the promotion of participatory or radical democracy has been examined (Goss, 1984; Edwards, 1995). However, more generalist studies suggest that women politicians are more likely than male politicians to value citizen participation and consultation in the policy-making process and in service delivery (Bers, 1978; Neuse, 1978; Carroll, 1992). Kelly's work in Scotland notes that women councillors will often insist upon effective consultation with the community (1992, 1995).

Many women councillors in the current study believe that they in some sense both 'stand for' and that they 'act for' women. However few women see themselves as acting only for women. Most women are keen to stress their wish to serve the

whole of the community; although they are aware of limitations of representation which explains a preference, in many cases, for grassroots consultation and participation.

Githens (1984) argues that US women politicians do not perceive their primary role as that of serving as guardian of women's issues nor as a role model to other women. Women are most likely to choose the role of a delegate and to define their function as that of representing the interests and general welfare of the whole community (Githens, 1984:56. See also Jennings and Thomas, 1968; CAWP, 1978; Merrit, 1980; Antolini, 1984). Similarly, in an Italian study Marila Guadagnini found that working for the whole community was more important to local women politicians than either women's interests or party political interests (1990).

Leijenaar and Mahon's cross-national survey found that women politicians are more likely to be concerned with political action in terms of problem solving, service delivery and developing policy; whereas male politicians are more likely to see themselves as 'trustees', and measure their success by their bargaining position in power structures (Leijenaar and Mahon, 1992). Traditionally, the role of delegate has been seen as a politically passive and reactive, and women's preference for it seen as underlining their lack of confidence or competence to make independent decisions. Githens suggests that these characterisations do not accurately reflect women's conception of their role and function (1984:57).

Women's political activity at both grassroots and elected levels has been forwarded by feminists as a challenge to the liberal democratic paradigm. For instead of the textbook competitive individual motivated by self interest, it is claimed that women's experience reveals a rootedness, a community-based politics, characterised by its sense of connection with others and with a set of communal needs, values and causes. The need to create a sense of Common Good, a major problem of political thought, is seen as largely redundant if women's contribution is taken into account (Ackelsberg and Diamond, 1987).

The themes of 'difference' were further developed in the current study by asking all interviewees direct questions about whether women have a distinctive role in politics. After Hedlund (1988) all the councillors were asked whether or not they agreed with the statement that women politicians behaved differently to male

politicians. In Hedlund's study of Swedish local councillors, 65% of female councillors did agree and 35% did not. In this study 65% agreed, a further 18% gave a qualified 'yes', for example 'some do, some don't ', and 18% disagreed:

Table 2.3: Do you agree with the statement that women and men behave differently in politics?

	Sweden	Scotland
Agree	65%	65%
Agree-quals	-	18%
Disagree	35%	18%

Sources: Hedlund (1988); Mackay (1996)

There was not a straightforward correlation between those women who used *style* or *resource* reasonings in the previous section and those who agreed with the direct question in this section. This illustrates the fissures of internal contradiction and faultlines of differences amongst sub-groups of women. Although some women councillors were aware of the complex difficulties, and considerable potential pitfalls of the 'distinctive contribution' or 'women's values' justification; the 'difference' and 'making a difference' arguments, in general, resonate with the experiences and opinions of most women. This includes women who elsewhere in their interviews were more reluctant to concede the political relevance of gender.

Representation holds multi-layered meanings for women councillors in this study; some women see their representation of women in terms of their symbolic presence in political elites, as a role model on an individual level to individual women; and as a challenge to the traditional view that politics is no place for a woman.

Others see themselves representing women *qua* women in terms of interests and agendas - a substantive presence and influence. However most women discursively explore variations and elements of both symbolic and substantive meanings. Betty

Paterson speaking during the school holidays, with her children playing in the corridors of the Regional Council headquarters, summed up her view of the symbolic and substantive presence of women in politics:

I feel the very fact that I am sitting there on the council as a woman - with all my experiences, with my kids outside - that's the best way. That's why I want more women on - no to sit there and go, 'What about women's issues' just to *do* it - quietly and without any fuss, get on with the job of being women on there and putting forward *a* woman's point of view. You don't have to say this is a *woman's* point of view ; just have to say this is my view, I'm a councillor - same as you - *listen* to me.

Most women councillors in this present study are careful to stress the differences between women as well as the commonalities - and the complexity of women's interests and women's issues will be further explored further in Section II of the thesis. A number of them also suggested that some men represented women better than some women. However despite the fluid and contested meanings of representation, the majority of women use notions of equality, parity and fairness to promote their claim for an equal presence in the polity *and* the majority also see themselves as, in some way, representing women (rather than any simplistic construct of Woman) and some of their diverse interests.

Furthermore, most women in this study believe that the increased presence of women in politics at local authority and national level will make a *difference* in terms of either style, or content or both. Studies by Brown and Galligan (1995); and Wilford et al (1994) found that female political activists in Scotland, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland all share similar perceptions and beliefs. These discussions illustrate complex understandings of representation and also suggest the utility of promoting multi-valued interpretations of representation.

Different rhetorics - gesture politics and the credo of difference.

In reality, of course, many feminists and women activists do believe that women will make a difference *qua* women in political decision-making bodies; but, as Lovenduski discusses, they are constrained by 'rules of the game' which condemn such claims as particularist (Lovenduski, 1993). There has also been a reluctance to invoke difference or 'women's distinctive contribution' by feminist political scientists, because of the potential these arguments have to be used by reactionaries

to reinforce stereotypes about women's role. Therefore, at present, the only legitimising discourse for increasing the number of women in politics is one of 'justice' or 'proportionality'. However without the promotion of additional reasonings and discourses which 'dignify' difference and delineate the gendered structure of both political and economic systems as well as ordinary lives, it is clear women will continue to have to fit the system.

The *Justice / Proportionality* reasoning presents a dilemma in terms of commitment to action. If, achieving equality of representation is seen as an 'ideal' outcome, one of symbolic rather than substantive importance, how hard are parties and systems, which have accepted the *Justice /Proportionality* argument required to try to 'enable' women's access? Despite the seeming straightforward appeal to parity - the gendered role of women intervenes to complicate, particularly their unequal burden in the sexual division of labour. This results in one of the features discussed in recruitment studies the 'supply' problem of aspirant women candidates, in other words the relatively low numbers of women who put themselves forward as candidates.

What price symbolic equality? If women will not necessarily make a difference then how reasonable would it be to expect political elites to make the radical restructuring required to fully include an 'awkward' group of people? Additional justifications may well be required in order to support demands for change. In practice and in terms of how women councillors discuss and explain their practice, the limitations of the equality approach are obvious

Norwegian elite politics, and Scandinavian politics more general, are exceptions to the general trend of female exclusion; with proportions of around 40 per cent women in the Cabinet, the national parliament and in regional political bodies. Between 1970 and 1985 the proportion of women politicians in Norway more than trebled; from less than 10% to 34% (Skjeie, 1991b:96). Hege Skjeie has argued that this 'political miracle' has resulted from a multi-pronged campaign, which not only invoked traditional arguments of justice and equality, but also underscored the political relevance of gender difference. She argues that over twenty years these arguments have been widely accepted and incorporated into political culture as the 'Credo of Difference'. (Skjeie 1991a, 1991b, 1995).

It was not individual women's right to equal - non discriminatory treatment which constituted the major motivation for the new representation demands. Instead it was an underscoring of difference that provided the crucial link to traditional principles of representation. Individual party women obviously demanded 'fair treatment' for themselves in the competition for political places. But simultaneously they underscored a more general claim of women's right to be represented by women. (Skjeie, 1995:12).

This can be illustrated by the change in political rhetoric about women candidates. In the early seventies debates stressed the need not to discriminate against women, but to choose 'the best person for the job'. By the end of the 1980s, the emphasis had shifted to one which underscored the importance of women's distinctive experiences. Skjeie quotes the Norway's female Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, 'It is to the best of society that women's values and women's sense of justice become a part of politics.' (Skjeie, 1995:11).

In Norway, formal quotas are operated by four out of the six political parties; and in a variety of other public bodies. In contrast, in Britain although, in principle, getting more women into politics is seen as a 'good thing'; putting that principle into practise has proved far more problematic. Serious attempts by the British Labour party to increase the number of potential female MPs in the next general election have met with hostility and derision not only from political rivals - who have dismissed positive measures as 'gesture politics' - but also from within party ranks. At time of writing (February, 1996) aspirant male candidates had successfully challenged the policy of all-women shortlists in selected seats by using legislation which was originally framed to equalise opportunities for women. 'Neither of us is fighting this for personal reasons,' said Peter Jepson, one of the men who took legal action. 'It's the principle of proper equality'.⁴ Despite public commitment from the Conservative party, it seems likely that less than a dozen Conservative women MPs may be returned at the next General Election⁵.

There are important cultural and systematic differences between Norway and Britain. Social group representation is more widely accepted in Scandinavian

⁴ Patrick Wintour, 'Challenge to women-only shortlists', *The Guardian*, December 12, 1995;

⁵ Natasha Walter, 'You just can't avoid those sexual politics', *The Guardian*, November 9, 1995.

politics; similarly systems of proportional representation allow quotas to be more readily administered through party lists. However, Skjeie argues that the transformation of women's political representation was won on rhetorical grounds, and the introduction of difference as a positive argument for change. Quotas are, 'an end product of a line of political arguments that have forcefully maintained that gender constitutes an important political category that needs to be fully represented' (1991:236).

In Norway, as in the discussions of women politicians in this study, definitions of difference are varied and fluid, and multi-valued. Skjeie suggests, in the Norwegian context, this lack of specificity was of benefit because it allowed different parties to interpret difference according to their own 'ideological persuasions' (1991:237).

Present strategies have not served women well in their campaign for equal presence in the polity in Britain, and have resulted in problems of legitimacy over the introduction and implementation of special measures, such as quotas and all-women short lists. The Norwegian case would seem to offer strategic attractions; and the addition of discourses around difference, presented in an accessible way, have positive potential to 'free up' discussion, and action, around women's representation in Britain. It is clear from this study, and also empirical findings in many other countries, that the discourses of difference resonate strongly with the perceptions and experiences of women politicians. Women politicians already call upon a much wider range of reasonings and justifications than those of justice and proportionality; however, at present, these *common sense* alternatives lack legitimacy. These issues are discussed and developed in the remaining Chapters in Section I.

In the following chapter, the question of why there are so few women in political elites is posed. The main results from recruitment studies, in both political science and organisational studies, are compared with women politicians perceptions of gendered barriers to equal participation in politics.

3 In the Way of Women: barriers to political life

Introduction

This chapter first examines the main reasons forwarded to explain why there are so few women in politics - the *barriers* to women's access into political elites. It will first discuss the framework within which the recruitment process takes place, using Norris and Lovenduski's multi-dimensional model (1995); It will then discuss barriers using the notions of ladders of recruitment, and supply and demand factors; and will provide some comparison between the findings of this study and other recruitment studies. It is not intended to be a detailed or exhaustive survey and whilst not seeking to minimise the complex barriers to recruitment, it focuses on two main themes: that of the sexual division of labour, and its inter-connection with other factors to constrain and disadvantage women as both aspirants and as political actors; themes which will be further discussed and developed here and in remainder of Section I. In this chapter, there is discussion of not only the barriers which inhibit women from *access*; but also factors which serve to disadvantage women once they have gained a *presence* in decision-making bodies; and which can serve to limit their influence and agency. Women discuss their own experiences as party members, candidates and elected members and the ways in which constraints operate at different levels within local and national politics.

Models of the political recruitment process

The political recruitment process is set against and placed within a multi-dimensional cultural and institutional framework which shapes, interacts and intervenes in complex ways. Patterns of recruitment will be broadly shaped by the cultural and political values of a society, for example whether it is broadly traditional or progressive (Elazar, 1966; Norris, 1994). Certain institutional factors in the political system may serve to promote or impede women's participation. The type of electoral system and patterns of party and legislative competition are identified as crucial institutional factors (Norris and Lovenduski, 1989, 1993, 1995; Norris, 1994; Brown and Galligan, 1993, 1995; Mackay, 1990). This political

systematic framework is overlaid with broad party political contexts. For example, specific party rules, party organisation and party ideologies will variously impact upon the recruitment process. The ways in which these contexts shape the recruitment of women into political elites are further discussed with reference to action programmes in the following chapter (Chapter 4).

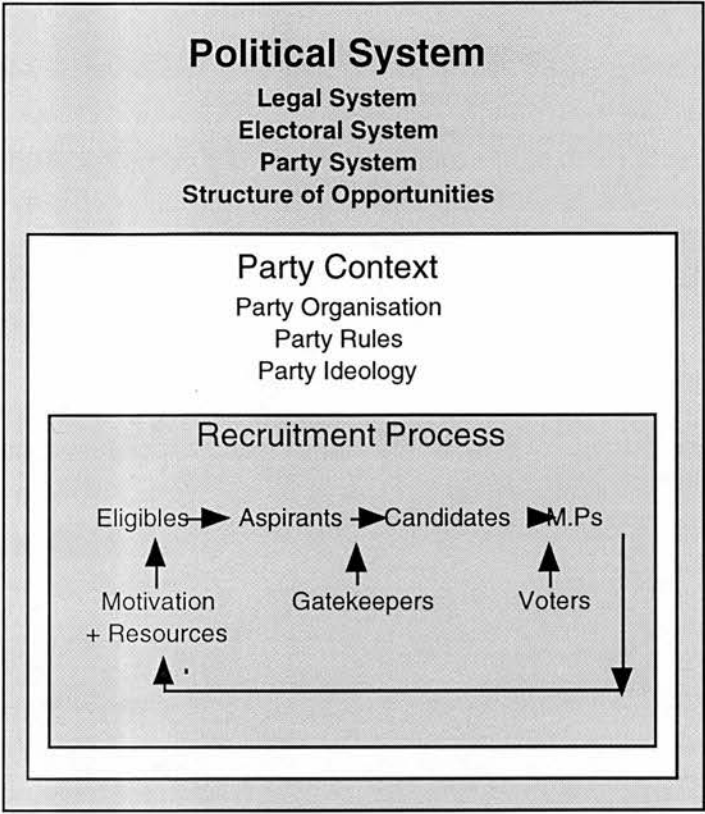
The recruitment process itself has been discussed by Pippa Norris (1994) as a three stage ladder¹. The model identifies potential barriers at each stage of the process of recruitment into political elites. At the first stage, people have to be available and willing to enter the pool of eligible candidates; at the second stage aspirants have to get the support from the selectorate and other gatekeepers; and at the third stage they have to win the votes of the electorate (1994:86-87). The first two stages of barriers are examined later using the supply and demand explanatory framework.²

Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski (1995), examining the interaction of gender, race and class in recruitment to Westminster, have developed a multi-dimensional model of comparative political recruitment process, a reproduction of which follows. They identify the three levels at which constraints or barriers to women may operate as *systematic*; *party political context*; and *individual*. These correspond with Alice Brown and Yvonne Galligan's *macro*, *meso* and *micro* level model of barriers (1995).

¹ Norris and Lovenduski use a more complicated five-stage ladder model in their later work (1995).

² There is little evidence to suggest that the British electorate discriminates against women candidates (Randall, 1987: 140-141).

Figure 3.1 : Norris and Lovenduski’s comparative model of the recruitment process.



Source: Norris and Lovenduski (1995:184) Figure 10.1

Supply and Demand Models

Norris and Lovenduski are among a number of people who use models of *supply* and *demand* to analyse factors affecting the recruitment process at the individual level (Lapidus, 1978; Randall, 1982, 1987). The supply side relates to the availability of eligible and aspirant women; and the demand side relates to their recruitment.

On the demand-side they put the selectorate, those within political parties who are empowered to choose candidates. What they term as the 'social-bias' outcome of the selection procedure is attributed to two potential forms of discrimination operated by the selectorate: firstly *direct discrimination* which they define as the positive or negative judgement of aspirants on the basis of characteristics seen as common to their group, rather than as individuals. Party selectors may, rely upon background

characteristics as a proxy measure of abilities and character; prejudice functions as an information short-cut.' (1995:14).

Secondly, *imputed discrimination* is forwarded as a potential demand-side factor. Imputed discrimination is characterised as personal favour for candidates from certain marginalised groups. But selectors do not pick their favoured candidate because of the perceived electoral disadvantages of their choice, for example that a black candidate in certain constituencies would lose votes. Norris and Lovenduski argue that while explanations of selector gender discrimination are 'pervasive' only rarely are they substantiated in research.³ They remain sceptical about demand-side explanations of women's under-representation at Westminster (1995:14-15; Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 *im passim*). They report, for example, that a survey of gatekeepers' attitudes, taken from the 1992 British Candidate Survey, reveals little discrimination by constituency party members against women candidates; and that members expressed support for the idea of more women in parliament. Although women were less likely to score as highly as men in terms of campaigning qualities Norris and Lovenduski argue that the difference is not great, which leads them to conclude:

There is no evidence that gender stereotypes necessarily disadvantage women candidates; and members believe nowadays women are vote winners. (1995: 141)

They argue that *supply-side* explanations, that there are too few women in the pool of eligibles, are more plausible. Supply-side explanations focus on constraints operating on potential aspirants presenting themselves. Norris and Lovenduski categorise supply-side factors as: *resources* (such as time, money and experience); and *motivational* factors (such as ambition, drive and interest).

They accept that there is interaction between the demand and supply sides, for example, potential aspirants may fail to present themselves because of their perception of prejudice; the complexity of procedures or anticipated failure. However there is little substantive discussion of the possible scale of what can be termed 'rational absenteeism', potential aspirants at various stages who do not

³ There is greater evidence they suggest for imputed discrimination to operate against black candidates (1995:142).

present themselves. Brown and Galligan (1995) note that these findings counter previous research which has forwarded direct and indirect discrimination in the selection process of candidates as a key explanation for women's under-representation. They argue that, 'The findings sit somewhat at odds with the authors' three-dimensional explanatory model of recruitment'; and with their previous conclusions about the complex and interactive nature of the recruitment process (1995:3).

Vicky Randall categorises supply side factors under general headings of socialisation; and situational and structural factors (1987: 122-143). Socialisation constraints refer to the effect of sex-role stereotyping and other socialisation which may inhibit women from becoming aspirants, in particular a psychological conflict between domestic and political roles (Githens and Prestage, 1977; Kelly and Boutilier, 1978). This is deemed to inhibit the development of politically desirable attributes such as confidence and ambition (Iglitzin, 1974; Farah, 1976).

Situational factors include the impact of family responsibilities, particularly motherhood, on availability, together with the related constraint of time and lack of control over time. Some researchers have posited women's time constraints and unpredictability of time demands, as reasons for their preference for non-institutional forms of political participation (Lee 1976; Hernes and Voje, 1980). Responsibility for children may be less of a barrier to participation in local politics than in national politics (Randall, 1987; Phillips, 1980).

Structural factors relate to the position of women within educational and professional opportunity structures, and the potential impact this has upon eligibility criteria. For example, if women are found in smaller proportions in influential brokerage professions from which many (particularly national) politicians are drawn .

Demand side factors discussed by Randall come under the headings of institutional barriers: including electoral systems, traditions of appropriate occupational backgrounds, traditions of long political apprenticeships; the ethos and organisation of political institutions at each level; and finally direct discrimination in terms of expression of male prejudice and power (Randall 1987:132). Randall argues, as do

Brown and Galligan (1995), that the supply and demand side of recruitment are inextricably linked:

[Women's] reticence is not, however, independent of the political system itself; the ethos and male chauvinism of politics is a deterrent, the practical operation of political institutions is difficult to reconcile with the demands of young children unless husbands are unusually co-operative, and it is the political system which determines the necessary attributes of its recruits. Women in not putting themselves forward may then be rationally anticipating the obstacles to a political career. (Randall 1987:130)

Barriers - Women's experiences, women's views.

Within the present study only two out of 53 women interviewed believed that gender was an irrelevant factor in the presence or non presence of women in politics. Women based their analysis of the barriers facing women in politics on both their own experience and upon their opinions and perceptions. The two may not always match, for instance women politicians with children may forward the explanation of family responsibilities as a major barrier to women in general, whilst not accepting it was a particular constraint for themselves.

Demand side factors - discrimination

Norris and Lovenduski's study found little evidence of local selectorates (local constituency parties) displaying prejudicial attitudes towards aspirant parliamentary candidates. The current research focuses on the level of local authority politics; although the experience of women councillors in parliamentary selection procedures was also examined. Competition for many council seats is less fierce than for parliamentary seats, many candidates are approached to put themselves forward (Barron et al, 1991). In the current study around 40 per cent of women had originally been approached to stand for a seat. It would appear that, under such circumstances, discrimination by gate-keepers would be unlikely.

Women politicians discussed their own experiences, if any, of discrimination; they also gave their opinions as to the nature and incidence of discrimination, in general,

to aspirant women. Two specific areas of personal discrimination were dealt with; firstly, experience of discrimination in any of the selection procedures in which the interviewees had participated, at both local government and parliamentary level; and secondly, experience of discrimination within party structures. Definitions of discrimination are generally problematic and indeed proved to be so in this case for many women politicians.

(a) discrimination in selection procedures

15% (8) of the women interviewed felt there had been clear discrimination in at least one of the selection procedures in which they had been involved. A further 8% (4) expressed concerns about possible discrimination.

My selection [in 1990] had 23 men and no women all sitting in a circle and I had to sit on a seat and face them all and be questioned; and the questions were, of course, 'How does your man feel about you doing this?' and 'You've got a wean, how will you manage?' and that stuff. All the kind of traditional views were around. There was discrimination and there still is. (Labour).

Oh yes, yes - quite definitely, certainly in terms of selection for parliamentary seats. I have actually been told on more than one occasion, where I have been on the shortlist, that: 'The trouble was you were a woman'; and, 'People are more comfortable with a man'; and, 'The wife is expected to do a lot in the constituency'. (Conservative).

I felt very definitely that being a woman was not helpful. Women did other things in the party and men fought the glamorous seats [...] The SDP, when I first joined it, was a very new party and people thought they could walk into council seats. And there were some very ambitious, very arrogant people coming in who suddenly thought, like Labour, like the Tories, there were going to be safe SDP seats - most of them have now disappeared. (Liberal Democrat)

Several women at selection and party political level identified other women as a source of opposition and resistance. The phenomenon of women party members discriminating against women seeking political office, particularly in the Conservative party, but also in the Labour Party, has been noted by others (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988). The current study noted examples of resistance or friction between women party members and women elected members within Conservative, Labour and Scottish National parties. Both the following cases are the experiences of Labour women involved in parliamentary candidate selection procedures some fifteen years apart.

I got a derisory vote even though I was chairman of the constituency [...] and the person who is the MP now is an excellent first class MP but he was a Trade Unionist who came down from Dundee [...] and I think I got about six votes out of 79. I think it had *everything* to do with being a woman because we had a very strong Women's Section, as they were then, people who really *did* make the tea and run the socials and I obviously didn't get their votes. I felt very bitter about that at the time, we'd really done a good job of changing it into a really active constituency - I felt the women should have given me more support. (Labour: 1970s).

Certainly one of the questions I was asked was, 'Had I thought about the affect this was going to have on my kids?' ; which I thought was totally outrageous and I think I replied: ' Well, I hope you're going to ask [the male candidate] the same question because I really don't think that's an issue'. And certainly coming from the Women's Section, this was the Women's Section selection meeting, I thought it was really rich ! (Labour: 1980s).

This is an interesting phenomenon, however there is not the space within this thesis to explore it further.

(b) discrimination in political parties

In addition, discrimination in party politics, for example within local branches and within the structure of the parties was explored.

I would say there are still 90% of the men in Labour party who say publicly that they support women - who don't given a secret ballot. And I think that becomes quite clear when you look at the Shadow Cabinet elections right down to your wee local who will stand for the treasurer of this branch [...] and I think that has to be faced up all the time and men have to challenged all the time. (Labour).

Other women discussed the case of parties which claimed to be gender-neutral but, in failing to see unconscious discrimination, were, in reality, 'gender-blind'.

The SNP likes to think of itself as non-discriminatory, which basically means you find in the party what you find outside - so, I can't remember the percentage, but practically all the convenors of the constituencies are men and the secretaries are... women !! Maybe because that's what mirrors life. But if you say to these people, 'See, you *are* discriminating against women', they would deny it. It's not deliberate, it's a sub-conscious thing, almost. (Scottish National)

Around a quarter of the women, mostly Labour, had experienced some degree of discrimination in party politics, ranging from clear resistance to their advancement in the structure to behaviour that trivialised and undermined them.

For a start they'd have to stop pulling wee flankers. I'll just give you an example: Our district party had its AGM - I'd verbally expressed to the Chair that I would be interested in being vice chair of the District Party but I wouldn't be at the meeting and would he take that as a verbal acceptance? Yeah, sure.

Now, the example at the CLP was that that self-same person couldn't come to the CLP but had said that he wanted to be considered for one of the vice chairs of the CLP.

Not only did they not consider me for the vice chair, because I wasn't there, and they said: 'Well, she's no here'; they also ensured that none of the office bearers positions went to women!

Now, I haven't tackled that as yet - but I will, because it's quite clearly unconstitutional and it's that kind of attitude of, 'Well, we'll do everything that we possibly can to avoid actually doing *anything*'. (Labour).

There were a number of women who felt very strongly that there was no discrimination now in politics. And three quarters of interviewees did not raise any issues of personal discrimination within party politics.

I've seen some very abrasive women in politics who I did not like one little bit. I think they were the ones who had to fight from the back all the time. That shouldn't happen now.[...] If you want my *honest* opinion, for the last twenty years, if a woman's *wanted* into politics she should have been able to get in. (Conservative).

However, although less than a quarter of women interviewees believed they had been discriminated against in terms of their own candidate selection procedures; more than a third (37.7%) forwarded discrimination as a reason why there were so few women in politics. Martlew et al's (1985) study of Scottish activists and councillors also cites *anticipation of discrimination* as a barrier to women presenting themselves as aspirants. (p.48,50)

(c) discrimination : ideal candidates - and women

A number of women, notably Conservative women, spoke about indirect discrimination against female aspirants in the form of the 'ideal candidate' syndrome. Although there may be little overt discrimination against women, women argued that *informal* 'eligibility' and 'suitability' criteria, embedded within selectorates, benefit men.

It's the same with all the men from all the parties - with one's own party, they will not choose a woman candidate if there is a male candidate. That somehow appears in their mind to be a more suitable candidate and that will probably just

be on the basis that he is married with a wife and two children - the standard boy-girl and a dog! (Conservative).

The ideal candidate syndrome was seen as operating in the Conservative Party and also the Labour party where, it was argued trade union links, rather than merit, were the more persuasive criteria, as indeed one of the Labour councillor's quoted earlier found to her cost. Another Labour woman terms it the 'Ah, but...' syndrome.

There's always this feeling of, ' Ah, but...'. There is this image of an MP or a politician as being a man, white, middle class etc. and I think there is as much opposition coming from women within the party to that [as men] - you know, to get more women into politics.(Labour).

There were three candidates who were at the selection conference of whom two were women and one was a man - and the man romped home on it - and I'm still convinced it was because he *looked* like a candidate. He had the right qualifications, one of which was undoubtedly [that he was a man]. I don't think many of the people who voted would have even realised that, it was more a mental image of what a candidate *is*. It is rather like young children saying men can't be nurses because they've only ever seen pictures of nurses with skirts and aprons and things. (Labour).

In contrast, Liberal Democrats and Scottish National women tended to believe that their parties were less likely to have in-built notions about ideal candidates because they did not have traditional 'interest' constituencies such as organised labour, business or farming.

You are very much judged as an individual in the SNP. You're not coming from either a business perspective into the Conservatives or farming [...] You're not coming through the trade union movement which again is dominated by men. You're really being judged: Who are you ? What do you do? Are you any good? So you're not being judged as: He's a good man, we knew his father. There's a tradition there [in the Conservative and Labour parties]. We don't have a tradition in the SNP - apart from the Ewings! It's really what folk think of the *person*. (Scottish National).

The ideal candidate syndrome was seen to be more likely to operate at parliamentary candidate rather than local authority candidate level, although it was also discussed in relation to office-holding within political parties, and in competition for committee Chairships.

Demand-side factors : male structures / male values

In common with the findings from other research (Randall, 1987; Brown and Galligan, 1995; Lovenduski and Norris, 1993; Wilford et al, 1993; Martlew et al, 1985), the current study found that barriers tended to intertwine and inter-connect in complex ways. Women identified factors which can be classified as 'systematic' as well as 'individual' as acting to exclude women. Political institutions were seen to be 'male structures', by which women understood that, at formal and informal levels, political institutions operate on 'men's terms'. This was seen as a substantive factor in inhibiting women as both party members and as aspirant political candidates. For example, 32% of interviewees thought that the male structures and the values of political arenas, such as councils and political parties, acted in a number of ways to exclude women, or to alienate women. Several women spoke about the Westminster Parliament as a 'boy's club' or a 'gentlemen's club'; and spoke about politics at national and local level in terms of 'boys' games'.

In addition, 15% (8) of the interviewees specifically cited women's *alienation* from party politics and politics in general as a reason why there were so few women in elected forums. This illustrates the complexity of 'unpicking' constraints because 'alienation' can be seen to be a *systematic* reason - i.e. the structure of politics, or an *individual* reason. As an individual reason, alienation can be interpreted in a number of ways: traditional recruitment studies would tend to explain it in terms of a lack of ambition, drive and interest; whereas a feminist interpretation can trace the inter-connection between exclusionary structures and values and individuals' reactions to them.

Other women discussed this issue at later stages of their interviews. They identified exclusionary and alienating elements integral to the structure (formality, times of meetings etc.) and the style (adversarial, competitive, non consultative) of male politics and the content of politics which led to, ' the creation of an atmosphere that women don't feel comfortable in'. Several interviewees discuss the fact that women did not see their concerns and interests as political - because the system did not recognise or promote politics as such.

Supply Factors - A question of resources ?

Personal *resources* can be categorised as including : time, confidence, support , experience, skills, finance and motivation. *Constraints* would therefore be explained partly by a lack of resources. In the study, family responsibilities were classed by women interviewees as both a resource and a constraint.

Only one woman believed that women lacked the skills to be politicians; and only four believed that women lacked the interest. In terms of selection criteria there was a clear belief that women, particularly at local level, met them - although it is perceived that they often lack confidence, or are not aware that their skills are transferable. A small number of women made a distinction between local government and national government and thought they personally lacked the necessary skills to be an MP - particularly public speaking skills.

In the study, the interlocking triangle of practical and psychological disadvantage: family responsibilities (77%), time poverty (43%) and lack of confidence (40%) were cited as the major barriers to women's increased representation in decision-making elites.

Time for politics

Women's *time poverty* was discussed as an explanation for the under-representation of women in both local and national government. This was explained in terms of both overall lack of time and also lack of flexibility, or unpredictability, of *time budgets* ⁴ Time poverty and the constraints of time budgets are usually explained with reference to women's traditional family and caring responsibilities:

I know of at least four mums who would love to [get involved] and are quite good at speaking up for their areas.[...] I've actually got one on the Community Council and she speaks up well for the people in the area - but everytime I say to her, ' Would you like to take it further ?' She says, ' I don't have time, I have the family.' And that's the whole problem. (Liberal Democrat).

The issue of women's 'double-shift', that is the dual burden for women who combine domestic and caring labour with paid work was also widely discussed. It

⁴ I borrow the phrase 'time budgets' from Martlew et al (1985: 49).

was considered to be extremely difficult for women to take on a third major time commitment. Around 25 per cent of the councillors work full-time in addition to their council duties; a further 21 per cent do some form of part-time paid work. Only one of the councillors interviewed juggled the care of an under-school age family, with a full-time paid job and council duties. She was contemplating trying to negotiate a job-share at work if she was to continue as a councillor.

I think for women in particular, if you've got children, they feel that they have a full time job. Small children and being a councillor is all too much for them. Because I was a councillor before I had children I suppose I was perhaps in a better position to carry on - because you're always in a better position to carry on something than to start something off. (Labour).

Fifty-four per cent of councillors do no paid work, this divides up (by self-definition) into: 7.5% housewives; 4 % unemployed (although more may be registered); 4 % retired and 39% classing themselves as full-time councillors. Eighty-seven per cent had had children - and all but 17% have had dependent children at some stage of their political career. In addition 9% (5) have other care commitments in the form of elderly parents, grandchildren etc. Some 28 % are currently caring for at least one dependent child and 7.5% have teenaged children; a further 34% had young or teenaged children at some stage of their time on the council. Many commented on the difficulties of combining work, family responsibilities and elected politics. This was more often an issue for younger women from all parties, which reflects child care commitments; it was also more generally an issue for Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP councillors, which may reflect higher levels of constituency work (Barron et al, 1991).

I find it hard enough to find time for my kids, never mind my Mum and my Gran - time commitments are the worst. (Labour).

I couldn't do the level of work that I'm doing if I didn't have somebody else at home who was bringing in a decent wage so that I didn't need to have to go out and earn a lot of money . I couldn't support my family on what I earn as a councillor - definitely not - and I think if you were working full-time, or even more hours part-time than I do, it would be extremely difficult to maintain the level of work (Labour).

To say you can be a councillor in your spare time and have a job is just nonsense if you're going to do it properly . It's absolute nonsense, especially in areas like this - I have a meeting nearly every night. (Labour).

Elsewhere, Martlew et al (1985) and Hills (1983) have both discussed the difficulties women candidates and councillors have juggling the triple demands of family, work and politics.

Confidence

One of the main traits cited by women as a barrier to entering elected politics is lack of confidence. In this study it was cited as a major barrier by 40 per cent of interviewees. Several women made a distinction between what traditional recruitment studies would call motivation and confidence. Thus whereas women are traditionally deemed as lacking in motivation, they argue that it is not motivation but confidence many women - who could be potential aspirants - lack.

I feel there's a lot of work because ordinary women say, 'I won't be able to do it' They don't need the motivation - they need to be given the confidence. (Labour).

In addition, it was argued repeatedly that whereas even quite mediocre men would put themselves forward for positions within parties and for nominations for seats; in contrast most women - including many very able women - lacked the confidence to put themselves forward.

I just felt I wasn't ready - I think I was a wee bit frightened, could I do it ? But really, thinking back, that was silly. When I think of some of the [male councillors] on District who are numpties - of course I could do it. (Labour).

I think it's automatic in how we either bring up men or gender imprinting - for men to say, 'I can do that'; and it's automatic for women to say, 'I can't'. And I do it myself, immediately go 'Ooop! I can't do that'. Whereas the men, who are possibly less talented or able or capable, will say, 'Yes, I'll do that!' and thrust themselves forward - I think what happens is that women are more likely to wait until they're absolutely sure in their mind that they will be completely successful. (Scottish National) .

Many councillors, like the Scottish National councillor above, see women's lack of confidence and men's over-confidence as the result of either biology or socialisation. They believe some women themselves still don't see politics as a job for a woman:

They don't really see it as being a female occupation, it's a bit like science it's not seen as a female occupation; partly because you have to be a bit tough I think to push yourself forward [...] and to speak up and that sort of thing. And

women's training and their socialisation tends to be against that so it's more difficult for them. (Labour).

Tricia Godman, a Labour councillor, who brought up three sons on her own whilst holding down a variety of jobs including that of a cabaret singer and a housemother in a Catholic children's home said her realisation that she did have something to contribute politically came as a result of returning to college as a mature student, aged 35, to study for a social work qualification.

I realised [I was political] when I went to college and got into discussions and arguments with students and lecturers, and realised I could pull on a lot of personal experience to justify my case. I would have to say there was *nobody* more surprised than me when I realised. And then people saying to me, ' You ought to do that because you've got a lot of experience' You're just going through your life and you don't think of it that way. (Labour).

In addition, a number of women discussed the complex links between women's confidence and discrimination. Maureen Irons, now a Labour district councillor in Aberdeen, became politicised as a miner's wife in the Kent coal-fields during the miners strike of 1983-1984.

Women like myself - it took the miners strike for me to have confidence. It's just lack of confidence, a lack of belief in themselves and fear of being laughed at - that's one of things that put me off as well. [...] Years ago, if I was sitting in the pub or miners' welfare club, and people [men] were discussing politics - and if you said something people laughed at you, and you immediately shut up. But now I let them laugh and then I turn round and say, ' Now, what was it you thought was funny about that ? Tell me what *you* think'; and that throws them and then they find they are actually in a discussion with you! But it's hard to overcome that, and that has a lot to do with the way women have always been treated as second class citizens. (Labour).

The undermining of women's confidence is also highlighted as a continuing process, which also constrains women after they enter politics. Several women spoke about the affect of verbal abuse, 'tongue lashings', from male political opponents. One older Liberal Democrat woman said she considered some of the attacks as a ' form of male violence'. Another younger Scottish National Party councillor, Kim Nicoll, discussed how the treatment meted out to her by her political opponents not only affects her own confidence but acts to actively dissuade other women from coming forward.

Oh, I've changed, yeah. [...] I think I was a bit thin skinned to be honest. But the guy, who's the Provost, said to me early on: ' Kim, you'll just have to learn to develop a thick skin and let it run off you and let it go' Because if you take it all in, then it can eat away your confidence. But the thing that I find with women - non political - have said, ' That's terrible what he said about you, how can you put up with that ? Oh, I couldnae'. (Scottish National).

Liberal Democrat councillor, Veronica Crerar, standing down after a long career in local politics in Edinburgh, spoke about some of the complexities of discrimination, and the links between an assessment of potential discrimination ('not putting my head above parapet'); confidence ('I wasn't asked'); and feelings of alienation and disjuncture with politics - particularly Westminster politics ('It's a hell of a life').

One of my women colleagues was talking to me the other day about standing for Parliament and I said, ' Oh well, nobody had ever tried very hard to persuade me to do so.' And she said, ' But a *man* wouldn't have waited for that!' And so, to a certain extent, I think we discriminate against ourselves [...] and I don't know how you get over that either, because I think - in business and politics - we do often put on our own glass ceiling, you know. I think I have become more aware of perhaps the *limitations* I've set on myself, and seeing that as a kind of discrimination. [...] You ask have I experienced discrimination, I haven't; because I haven't actually put my head above the parapet. I think before I wouldn't have really been so much aware of that [...] but I think now I feel that there are those areas where, if I had tried to get into, I would have then felt more discrimination [...] I don't know, maybe that's just an impression. I haven't held myself back from doing these things because I said 'Goodness, if I tried to get into Parliament they would all be against me or people would try and stop me'. I haven't stood for Parliament because I just felt that was above and beyond the sacrifices I was willing to make. (Liberal Democrat).

Connections - Time, Caring and Confidence and the gendered structures of society

In addition to specific factors such as family responsibilities, time and confidence, more than a third (38%) of women also forwarded broad sociological - or socio / psychological reasons for the barriers existing within society which prevented women from entering politics. Family responsibilities and work patterns were seen as part of these wider gendered social structures. These find parallel with Randall's discussion of socialisation and situational constraints. (1987:123-130).

I talk to a lot of older women who now express regrets - my mother being one of them .What she could have done - realising now what she could have done and she didn't, she just accepted a role. (Labour).

It's a circular argument, if you keep thinking that the children are the women's responsibility then obviously that's why employers look on men in a different light than they look on women employees. And that is why a man is able - even in quite a low and menial type of work - is able on average to earn more than women is. We really need a *quantum leap* - everybody's whole mental focus on everything needs to change - not only in this arena but in many arenas.

Here we're back to the fact that there are so few women MPs and really although there are many more women councillors, still percentage-wise there's only one woman to every nine or ten men on this council and that's pretty par for the course. And it's for all these in-built reasons that I think people have very deep inside their psyche, men and women - women are often their own worst enemies; and they don't *recognise* that they are, so they can't do a re-think because they don't even *realise* that they are thinking in that old stereotyped way. (Conservative).

Support - and resistance

Many women recognised personal support as a resource, and as a fairly vital prerequisite for entering political life. The support of family and friends was seen as particularly valuable. Conversely, the lack of support - or resistance - of women's partners was discussed as a significant constraint or barrier. About a quarter (24%) of interviewees suggested that a inhibiting factor to women being politically active is what can be characterised as the *resistance* of men in general to support their partners' activism either at party level or in elected office.

It has always been the same - you are a woman, you won't be able to do it and that was all men-talk. They always say that if a man is successful there is always a woman behind him - there are pushy women who don't want anything but to encourage their husbands to do this, that and the next. But it would be a good idea if the husband for a change said 'You can do it, do it. I get help from you, you get help from me.' (Scottish National).

More than one in four women interviewees (28%) cited the *reluctance* of men to do a fair share of domestic and child-caring work as a major factor in decisions by women not to participate, or in activist women having to leave politics. Indeed several women spoke of personal experience or the experience of other women having to leave politics at party, council or trades union level because of resistance, and in some cases physical violence, from partners.

It's difficult some days to pick up the phone and say 'I'm not going to come home, because if I come home, I'm only going to have 15 minutes in the house and then I'll have to go out again - so I'm just going to stay'. Some men have a lot of difficulty with that, and I know of women elected members who have

done their stint for four years and had to give it up because it's their marriage or the job. They've been very articulate, very hardworking councillors - but they've been given a choice. (Labour).

Barron et al's study of councillors, candidates and political activists in the South West of England suggests that the support of partners is a more significant factor for women than men in terms of entering and remaining in elected politics (1991: 87-107). They characterise support as including practical and emotional elements. For instance, the taking over of aspects of household labour previously done by the activist; the undertaking or assistance with partner's public duties; encouragement and emotional support. Barron et al find that men, in general, take for granted - and get high levels of practical and emotional support from their wives although they are likely to downplay its value. Many male councillors failed to acknowledge the importance of emotional support, although their wives were clear they were providing valuable support. In the case of female councillors, women are particularly appreciative of emotional support from partners. Few women councillors received significant levels of practical help from partners; and Barron et al note they felt they had to express gratitude for any support they did get - often characterising themselves as 'lucky' or 'fortunate', although few were getting the levels of support that male councillors routinely received from their wives (pp.98, 105).

Whereas women who aspire to council positions need to ensure not only that they can cope with the extra work, but that their husbands will give them *active* encouragement before they start, men are more likely both to assume their wives acquiescence - and to get it. (Barron et al, 1991:92).

In the current study the support or resistance from partners and family was identified as a crucial factor for many women in seeking or continuing a political career.

He's very supportive, I couldn't have done it. I need my husband there to go home and moan to. He attends functions with me, and he's always there to listen. (Scottish National).

Oh yes, I could never do it without [my husband]. He took early retirement and has really become the house person. He has my meal ready at night, he looks after me, he does the washing, the ironing - I'm very, very lucky. (Scottish National).

The majority of interviewees said they had some degree of support from partners or immediate family. A number said they would not have made the decision to stand without securing support before hand. Liberal Democrat councillor Alison Hay was already a member of Argyll and Bute District council before she also took on a seat on Strathclyde Regional Council in 1994. She is clear that she would not have started her political career without first negotiating agreement with her husband and two sons.

I wouldn't have done it [...] if I hadn't had the support of my family. Particularly at the district - that was a big step and we spent a long time discussing that, my husband and I - and the boys - I wanted to take them with me . My oldest son is much more understanding, he's a bit more independent anyway . I explained to him that it wasn't just me as Mother, it was me as a person and I had my life to lead as well - at least I wanted to pick up the reins of that, if you like. And Andrew, the older one, was very understanding about that, and he has been quite helpful . The younger one is a wee bit more clingy anyway but even he has been very good - they've all been super.(Liberal Democrat).

Others speak about resistant partners, or partners whose support rests on a clear agreement that their lives should not be disrupted by their wife's political involvement.

I'm self-driven - in fact my husband was most *unencouraging*. Now he just shuts up and says nothing. (Conservative).

I don't want to say that men are male chauvinist pigs ! But, you know, you have to understand - [My husband] said to me : ' Darling, I don't mind what you do - as long as you're in when I get home!' (Conservative).

In Barron et al's study they also found that the irritation or resistance of several male partners of women councillors rested on objection to their wives 'not being there' and to the expectation that women, whatever their other responsibilities and interests, provide domestic stability. They recount instances where 'male irritation at domestic disruption' resulted in sabotage, for instance one man threw his wife's council papers in a nearby skip; and another used his wife's absences to justify his extra-marital affairs (1991:95-97).⁵

However lack of support has not prevented some women, in the current study, from seeking office and continuing to serve as elected members. One Labour councillor,

⁵ See also Martlew et al's study of Scottish activists (1985: 55).

whose ex-husband is also a councillor, spoke of his opposition to her aspirations to first stand for council and his continuing lack of support.

I still don't get any encouragement from him. He will give his advice freely to others - if I ask him [he says] ' *You're the person who wanted to be here - go it alone.*' (Labour).

Several councillors spoke of female colleagues who had left politics over the years because of the accumulation of difficulties from partners' continuing lack of support or opposition. A number of interviewees had personal experience of previously supportive partners withdrawing their support. A number of women attributed the breakdown of their own marriages to factors arising from their involvement in politics. One recently separated councillor said her husband told her he felt neglected, especially after the birth of their child placed even greater demands on her time. An older woman, with hindsight, believes her husband - also active in politics- felt threatened by her growing confidence.

I think probably it was one of the factors in the break up of my marriage. I was no longer a councillor at that time, but I was still involved in politics. But going out to work and being independent and being an uppity woman was certainly a factor in the break-up of my marriage.(Labour).

Financial resources.

Financial resources have been found to bear some significance upon facilitating or inhibiting aspirant women at parliamentary level (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). Perception of this has led to the creation of a British version of the American funding programme EMILY's List (Early Money is Like Yeast) which aims to make cash awards to help aspirant women with the costs of chasing a candidacy. However other studies find that activists are more ambivalent about whether finances are a significant inhibiting factor. (Brown and Galligan 1995).⁶

However at local authority level, where councillors receive only modest allowances for their work, finance was considered to be a relevant issue. Although relatively few women cited the financial disincentive directly - others discussed the implication of financial resources in terms of either having to give up or reduce

⁶ They found it to be a significant factor in the the Republic of Ireland, but not in Scotland. Additionally, they report that the lack of uptake by Scottish women for financial help through the Labour Party's Emily's List.

paid work in order to be an effective councillor, or the financial burden of paying for child care whilst carrying out council duties. Yvonne Allan, a Labour councillor and now a single parent, spoke about the pressure of combining council work with a job.

I throw so many balls in the air financially that if I could be paid as a councillor, it would save me a lot of hassle. I think it is discrimination because I have to work part-time to be all the places I need to be. The councillors who perform - or are seen to - are the councillors who have the time to be here to read all the stuff that you get dished out. (Labour).

In addition, a number of older women stressed the lack of pension rights that went with the job of councillor - whilst its onerous nature prevented many women, especially middle-aged women who were divorced, from building up pensions by taking other employment. One middle-aged Labour councillor has found herself, as a result of divorce, with financial pressures at present - and the prospect of a poor old age.

We don't get very much money for being a councillor and me living on my own - it's quite a struggle. And, not only that, we don't have any pension rights so therefore on the Fifth of May if I'm not elected - I'm going to the unemployment exchange, I don't have anything. I know there's a lot of women out there who when they come my age - and there's more and more women getting divorced - and they're going to left with nothing. (Labour).

Indeed another middle-aged Labour councillor, also divorced, stood down during the course of this fieldwork because she calculated that she needed to work full time until retirement age in order to build up some pension. She hopes to re-enter politics after she retires.

It's more because of economics [...] if you're not earning a full time wage, then when you become a pensioner, you're going to be very, very poor and people have to look at that as well. One of the decisions I've made is that if I want to live any sort of reasonable life at all then I've got to make sure I'm working to build up some kind of a pension. (Labour).

Barriers : Family Responsibilities / Domestic Labour

The factor identified, in this study, as most significant in inhibiting and excluding women from elected politics is family responsibilities, that is women's traditional role in the home; the sexual division of domestic labour; and women's caring

responsibilities, primarily but not exclusively, for young children. Three out of four of the interviewees (77%) cited family responsibilities as a major reason why there were so few women in politics, and in this context Westminster was seen as particularly problematic, both in terms of practical difficulties, and also in terms of women's ideas and values. There was also a sense in which women feel a system which forces female - and male - politicians to be separated from their families is undesirable at both a personal and a more general level.

Really I think that takes you back to issues of child care and things like that - that's a big problem being a woman and in politics if you want to pursue that career - I mean what's the Houses of Parliament ? It's incredible - that's presumably why a lot of [women] are not there because what do you do with your kids for heavens sake? (Conservative).

Speaking from personal experience, while you are bringing up a child from the ages of nought to sixteen, it would be impossible to be an MP unless you lived in London. I mean, if I was handed a safe seat tomorrow, I couldn't do it - because of my 14 year old son. What would I do? Move him down to London to finish his education and fly him back up every weekend ? Leave him with his big brother or with his Granny? (Labour).

Interestingly, the Labour councillor above then goes on to talk about men's resistance or men's reluctance as a contributory factor. A single parent herself, she argues that women with partners are at no greater advantage. An assumption that is commonplace amongst male parliamentary candidates, is that their wives will 'hold the fort' back in the constituency and, indeed, 'hold the baby'. For male partners to act similarly is seen as exception - a sacrifice that few male partners would 'suffer'.

Even if I was with a partner, I think it would be almost impossible, because there are very few partners - very few *men* I think who would sacrifice - who would suffer that. (Labour).

A question of power

Although women from all parties spoke about the resistance of men to the progress of women into politics; and discussed this resistance at several levels: for instance, individual men's resistance to their partner's aspirations; individual men as political actors; and exclusionary male structures and practices, only a small number of women, all Labour, characterised this resistance as power; or more specifically as men's unwillingness to give up some of their power.

The men are feart to let go of their power - it's nae that the women don't want to be there or hav'nae got the stamina - but a lot of women see it as the Men's Club.(Labour).

Women from the three other parties, and also some Labour women, were more likely to explain resistance in terms of the remnants of traditional sex-role stereotyping; or to describe resistance or discriminatory practice without analysis. These themes are further developed in later chapters.

Discussion and Summary

Women in local politics describe and discuss a complex of barriers which intertwine and which serve to inhibit potential aspirants at party and candidate level, while disadvantaging women as political players within the system. In contrast to Norris and Lovenduski (1995), women in this study identify substantive demand *and* supply side factors as barriers to the recruitment of women in local and national politics. It is clear from the councillors opinions and their own experiences that demand-side discrimination works at a multi-levelled and in a multi-faceted way. In this study an inter-locking triangle of practical and psychological disadvantage: family responsibilities; time poverty; and under-confidence was identified as the root cause of women's under-representation. However each of these interconnecting factors also interplay with demand-side factors such as men's resistance on individual and systematic bases. In addition to direct discrimination, indirect discrimination in terms of 'ideal candidate syndrome' was also identified; as well as more general strategies of undermining women and thus reinforcing under-confidence. Exclusionary and alienating elements were identified as integral to the structure of political parties and also national and local government ; to the 'male style' of politics; and to the political agenda. These factors all contribute to 'the creation of an atmosphere that women don't feel comfortable in'.

These explanations are broadly similar to the findings of Brown and Galligan's study of female activists in The Republic of Ireland and Scotland (1995). Irish women saw family responsibilities and family finances as prime factors for women's under-representation in Irish political life; whilst family responsibilities, societal stereotyping and lack of confidence were most commonly proffered as constraints by Scottish informants. Both case studies highlighted female unease with male structures. In Northern Ireland, Wilford et al found that women

councillors favoured explanations which described 'the interaction of psychological, familial and patriarchal factors' (1993). Earlier studies at local government level focus upon explanations of discrimination by the electorate, women's dissonance with the 'style' of politics and political structures; and women's under-confidence. All studies forward family responsibilities as the major barrier to women's participation in local politics (Shaul, 1982; Hills, 1983; McGrew and Bristow, 1984; Martlew et al, 1985; Barry, 1991).

These factors and processes intertwine to create a complex web which traps many aspirant women and which also, perhaps more significantly, acts to prevent women from aspiring in the first place. To be sure, women, like the councillors interviewed in this study, do develop complex coping strategies to deal with the constraints and barriers; and do become successful and effective politicians. However they are further disadvantaged by an on-going process of constraint and exclusion which leaves them with less time for the politicking, the building and maintenance of networks of political support which sustain male political careers (see also Shaul, 1982: 496-7). The importance of networks will also be examined in Section II.

The unequal domestic and caring burden of women is often characterised as a truism but it needs attention because is a fundamental barrier to women. Family responsibilities represent a hurdle to women - they impede, restrict and shape women's entry and presence in both the world of work and of politics. It is also inextricably linked to men's resistance as political players, as social actors and as partners to give up some of their power.

The following chapter examines some of the potential measures to increase the number of women in politics. It compares equality and access debates and equal opportunities models in political science and organisational studies with the discourses of councillors in this study, especially around issues of positive action and transformatory change.

4 What is to be done ? Models and measures

Introduction

This Chapter examines some of the debates around the question of ' What Should Be Done ?' It discusses some possible measures to increase the number of women in politics explored by councillors in this study. As discussed in the preceding chapter, women forward complex, interconnected explanations about women's under-representation therefore the discussion around measures is similarly complex. The chapter also focuses on the discourses which act as justifications for, or constraints against action - particularly positive action. I seek to bring together some of the parallel debates on equality and equal opportunities from political recruitment, employment and organisational studies.

The chapter first returns to the concept of equality and overviews some of the definitions and debates surrounding equality and equal opportunities; it also discusses different types of equal opportunities models. The multi-dimensional framework introduced in Chapter 3 is used to understand how discourses around equality and difference, recruitment, representation and equal opportunities are shaped and constrained by existing systematic, structural and ideological contexts and hegemonies. In turn, it examines the interplay between dominant constructions of equal opportunities and access in political discourse and how these rhetorical stances translate into action. The model of the Short and Long Agendas of Equal Opportunities is also introduced in this chapter as a model within which to explain and analyse different types of action.

Women councillors' common sense discussions of what should be done, and what can be done, are explored and compared with dominant political discourses. They show preference for the long agenda project of transformatory change, but their discussions are suffused with a sense of closure as to how to get ' from here to there' without legitimising discourses.

Defining Equality

Equality and equal opportunities are contested terrain at theoretical and political level in part because there are several definitions of equality. Elizabeth Meehan and Selma Sevenhuijsen suggest that some of the difficulties arise because equality is used as both an analytical concept and a political demand (1991: 4).

Evelyn Mahon (1991) after Onora O'Neill (1985) differentiates between *formal* and *substantive* equality. Formal equality is concerned with procedures and rule, with fair play, and is asserted to be rational, objective and non arbitrary; whereas substantive equality is concerned with outcome in terms of equal success rates for all the major groups in society. Thus equality is both a principle and a goal.

The most commonly understood - and the politically dominant - meaning of equality is formal or procedural equality which requires that all people be treated 'as if' alike. This formal or 'classic liberal' equality is conceptualised as equality before the law - or *equal rights*. It arises from the dominance of social contract liberalism in political/ philosophical discourse in which individuals are seen as autonomous and unencumbered and are characterised as equally free to compete for social and symbolic resources, including power. Discrimination against individuals from certain groups is seen as the remnants of irrational prejudices when people were ascribed status or certain character traits as a result of the social, ethnic or gender grouping to which they belonged. The equalising impetus within liberal democracy is that of creating the conditions for equal competition, thus formal and legal barriers are removed. The significant differentiating factor is merit. Therefore inequalities of outcome are explained as a result of individual differences in talent, experience or other required criteria - ie. unequal merit. This, broadly speaking, is the position of unmodified liberal democratic discourse in terms of citizenship and politics in which all adult individuals are seen as equal citizens, each with the right to vote and to stand (compete) for political office.

However material understandings of equality, which include economic and social equality, have been partially incorporated into notions of equal rights, for example in the liberal and social democratic welfare states that exist in much of Western Europe, particularly in Scandinavia. In terms of employment, liberals accept that, despite the removal of formal barriers, women and other marginalised groups may

remain disadvantaged. This insight is not necessarily an acceptance of the reality of institutionalised and structured inequality, but is premised instead on an understanding that present circumstances can be as a result of past discrimination. Thus, the liberal model can incorporate affirmative action, ie. a material element. The implementation of special measures are justified as a means to redress the lingering effects of historic disadvantage - but are viewed as temporary (Richards 1980).

'Equal rights' discourse privileges the idea that women are not fundamentally different from men. Competing or modifying notions of equality arise from a recognition that not all citizens are equally able to compete, that there is not a level playing field or a level starting point. Substantive equality needs to take account of differences such as class, race and gender.

Equal Opportunities Models of Recruitment

Janette Webb and Sonia Liff (1988) after Nick Jewson and David Mason (1986) discuss the conceptual confusion surrounding the theory and practice of equal opportunities policies in relation to women and ethnic minorities. Jewson and Mason identify two models of equal opportunities, liberal and radical. The liberal model favours formal procedures towards equal access to jobs; whereas the radical model uses positive discrimination, for instance preferential hiring, in favour of those previously excluded or under-represented.

The liberal model sees equal opportunities as a procedural solution to an individualised problem - that of individuals subject to prejudice because of the stereotyped beliefs about their group characteristics. The corrective is the implementation of procedures which ensure candidates are judged on their individual merits.

There is confusion because liberal models can be proactive and can use affirmative action (AA) to redress the effects of past inequality. Webb and Liff cite an AA programme at a North American University which standardised procedures, set targets and monitored figures. However liberal AA programmes differ from radical models because the emphasis is upon fair play rather than redistributive outcomes.

If the problem of under representation can be traced to the available pool (ie. too few women with appropriate qualifications) then the institution is absolved.

Preferential hiring is another measure which has liberal and radical variants. Liberal preferential hiring would operate by favouring women or minority group candidates over other similarly qualified candidates. However they would all have passed 'on merit'. The radical model asserts that minority candidates - if at least minimally qualified - should be hired (Mahon: 1991:154-155).

Webb and Liff argue that both the liberal and the radical models fail to challenge the legitimacy of meritocracy. Although radical models override 'suitability' criteria they give too much legitimacy to the criteria on which jobs are offered, and the hegemonic male values in which they are embedded. As such, radical models fail to expose suitability criteria as socially constructed and largely based in acceptability. They argue that job specifications and criteria are gender and social constructs.¹ 'Suitability becomes embedded within what is said to be a dispensable acceptability criterion - whether one is female or male.' (Webb and Liff, 1988: 546). Webb and Liff suggest a third 'alternative' model which would challenge conventional constructs of merit.

Norris and Lovenduski (1995) develop three equal opportunities models of political recruitment : meritocratic, affirmative action and radical. The meritocratic model is organised around formal procedures to eliminate overt discrimination of acceptability (on the grounds of, for example, gender, ethnic and social background); and focuses on suitability in terms of criteria. In the affirmative action (AA) model it is recognised that marginalised groups do not have equal opportunity of gaining the criteria, therefore criteria is waived or relaxed in order to achieve a desired outcome. The radical model looks to re-interpreting jobs (or political posts) and standard notions of merit to make them reflect the realities of marginalised groups. It is argued that the liberal/liberal affirmative action model is dominant in organisational life (Webb and Liff, 1988) and the meritocratic model in candidate recruitment (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995).

¹ The gendered structure of employment has been explored by several researchers (Cockburn 1985, 1991; Beechey and Perkins 1985)

Agendas For Change - The Long and the Short of it

Cynthia Cockburn argues there is need to move away from the liberal - radical dichotomy if we want to more fully understand equal opportunities and its potential. (Cockburn, 1989; 1991). Instead she uses the concept of the short and the long agendas for equality to analyse and describe strategies for equal opportunities in employment. The short agenda is premised on a notion of equality concerned with the assimilation of women (and other marginalised groups) within the status quo. It is formal and procedural, 'but nonetheless desirable'; whilst the longer agenda is concerned with 'equivalence' or 'parity', and seeks transformatory change within a system (society, work, politics) to take account of difference. She argues that, 'there is likely to be a greater potential constituency for such a concept of EO than for the pursuit of vested minority interests.' (1989:218).

Applying Cockburn's concept to the field of women and representation: the short agenda would in principle involve a public commitment by political parties and institutions towards increasing the number of women in politics as it is currently constituted. In practice a short agenda for action would be characterised by practical concerns, generally acceptable measures to create a level playing field or a level starting point - such as standardising selection interviews, eliminating discriminatory practices, and also some positive action programmes like women's training. Quotas are more contentious, they are certainly not on everyone's short-term agenda but it is clear some women political activists, particularly in the Labour party, characterise them as such.

The long agenda would involve radical changes and I further define the long agenda, at a preliminary stage, to be concerned with ideology and with challenging dominant discourses. Long and short agendas tend to interconnect and are open to interpretation. It is difficult to argue precise definitions, but the long agenda might be said to contain elements of the following. Firstly, changes to society in order that women and men were equally available to participate in politics. For instance, this could mean that measures would be taken to ensure a more equal division of household and caring labour between women and men, or increased state support for people with caring responsibilities. Secondly, politics would be reframed to incorporate 'women's values', to assimilate their preferred ways of working; and which reflect their interests and concerns; this element is the *longest* agenda.

Therefore all measures, be they liberal or radical , are contained within Cockburn's shorter agenda unless they contain the potential to fundamentally transform existing power relations and the gendered structures of organisations and institutions.

Political parties and Models for change

Joni Lovenduski (1993) uses a three-stage model to characterise party political organisational strategies of change to include women: firstly, the *rhetorical* where political parties publicly accept women's claims for increased presence; secondly, programmes of *affirmative* or *positive action* are adopted including the targeting of aspirant women, encouragement and training and the possible introduction of 'eye-opener' targets; the third and most radical strategy is described as *positive discrimination*, whereby places are reserved for women for example in party executives, on candidate slates or shortlists.

This model, although informative, does not incorporate the role of ideology in party political organisational response. Alice Brown and Yvonne Galligan (1993) discuss the importance of party ideology in determining outcomes for women's representation. They note three types of political management around issues of women's representation: *promotional*, *active intervention* and *status quo*. *Promotional* strategies involve elite support, policies to encourage participation, the provision of resources and sponsorship of individual women; *active intervention* concerns the deliberate modification of party rules and structures to increase the representation of women, for example through statutory quotas. *Status quo* refers to parties which are resistant to change (1993:167).

In their study of action around women's representation in political parties in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland they found that there was a broad pattern whereby liberal-orientated parties favoured promotional strategies; Left and radical parties - with a tradition of economic and social intervention - favoured active intervention, whilst parties of the Right tend adopt the third strategy of status quo. In addition to matching strategy to ideology, Brown and Galligan introduce secondary explanatory factors: the process of party modernisation which can act to reinforce, or modify the pattern. For example, in the Republic of Ireland, they note growing support within Fianna Fáil for interventionist policies; and perceptions of

electoral pressure have led to the Conservative Party in Britain becoming increasingly responsive in terms of promotional strategy (1993:187).

Brown and Galligan also discuss the impact of external events or movements which may act as motors of change, for example the election of Mary Robinson as President in the Irish Republic, and the broad based movement of civic renewal in Scotland around the campaign for a Scottish Parliament. Both Brown and Galligan (1993), and Lovenduski (1993), stress the importance of internal pressure from feminist activists organising within political parties in gingering parties into action.

These typologies, although informative, do not neatly parallel the ideas of the long and short agenda. All three stages of the former model may be contained within the short agenda - ie. the assimilation of women into the body politic, without reference to the longer agenda of transformatory change. The second model which highlights the ideological underpinnings of political strategies however contributes to the understanding that programmes of positive action and positive discrimination, or active intervention, may only be possible where broader understandings of equality are accepted, which are concerned with equality of outcome as well as formal equality of opportunity.

Models and frameworks

Returning to the Norris and Lovenduski model outlined in Chapter 3. The framework can be modified and used to map the contemporary ideological and structural terrain upon which the under-representation of women in political elites is theorised and tackled. Programmes of action, and their attendant justifications, are influenced by factors at a number of levels: at a system level, party level and personal level.

At system level, all women politicians are affected by dominant liberal democratic discourses of justice and equality; and the legal framework of equal opportunities rather than equal outcomes. Equal opportunities - or equal treatment - involves ensuring that women are treated equally to men. This is the legal basis of the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. For example, discriminatory rules and procedures are outlawed. However, equal opportunities does not address the possibility that women, for a number of reasons, may be prevented from

competing on equal terms with men. This issue was tackled in Article 4 of the 1979 UN Convention; which allows for temporary special measures aimed at achieving *actual* equality - thus the concept of positive or affirmative action -should not be considered as unlawful sex discrimination. However despite the UK government's ratification of the article; UK law forbids all discrimination except where expressly permitted, basically certain sex-specific training (Cockburn, 1991: 31-33). The weakness of the legal framework leads Cockburn to comment:

In moments of despair women express the feeling that an Act which is so even-handed in its treatment of the dominant and the disadvantaged sex must have been designed to prevent rather than to achieve equality for women. (1991:34).²

In addition at this level there is the context of broader social and political culture, which is generally emancipatory; and the electoral system where women are considered to be disadvantaged by the 'first past the post' majoritarian tradition (Norris, 1994).

At *party political* level they will be influenced by the electoral/social salience of the issue of representation, party -state relations, party rhetoric, party organisation, levels of internal debate and rules of the game. All political parties have made public statements about the need to encourage more women into political decision-making assemblies, particularly into the Westminster Parliament. However after that, parties have varied widely in the types of measures, if any, they privilege and the underlying reasonings for action (or inaction). Between 1979 and 1987 all the major parties made attempts to improve their performance and tackle the issue. Pressure stemmed partly from the media attention that the issue received and the establishment of the all-party 300 group which campaigns to get 300 women MPs into the Westminster Parliament by the end of the century and has acted as a lobby and a training, publicity and resource group; and partly as a result of feminists moving into mainstream politics, particularly the Labour Party (Wainwright, 1987; Sheila Rowbotham et al, 1979; Lovenduski, 1993; Brown and Galligan 1993). This

² More recently a Council of Europe seminar 1989 has introduced the concept of parity or equivalence '*democratie paritaire*' which acknowledges the sex specificity of women and men (Cockburn, 1991:31-32 - citing Apprill 1990). The 'right to be different and the right to equal status' was underscored in the Resolution of the 5th European Conference of Women Elected Representative of Local and Regional Authorities in July 1995. (Information for Women - Directorate- General X (1995) *European Parliament Information Communication* No. 55, European Commission, Brussels, October.)

reflects the social salience of the issue. Opinion polls and other indicators, such as the EC Eurobarometer, consistently register high degrees of public support for women in politics.³ In Scotland there have been high levels of civic activity and mobilisation of female political activists and other feminist and women's groups around the issue of gender balance in the new Scottish Parliament. (Brown, 1993, 1995b, Breitenbach, 1995b).

At British level, since the mid -1980s there have been perceptions of electoral gains for political parties in presenting themselves as 'women's' parties.⁴ This issue has perhaps had the most salience for the Labour Party in its disastrous performance in the 1983 General Election when the Alliance gained a percentage point more of women's votes than Labour (MORI/ Cockburn 1987) - eight percentage points more than men. Lisanne Radice in a post 1983 election Fabian pamphlet summed it up: 'Presentation is crucial. The Labour Party has to lose its image as a male dominated party' (1985:19). There is an understanding that the party's electoral revival post 1983 has been in part aligned to its improved image and the resonance of its social agenda with women..This has resulted in the twin processes of modernisation and (partial) feminisation.⁵

The parties have differing understandings of equality and representation. Within the Conservative party the theme of merit, allied with formal equality of opportunity (ie. the absence of discriminatory rules and procedures) is particularly strong. It is argued that women of talent have a fair chance to succeed (Norris, 1993; Lovenduski and Norris 1993 : 52). There is implacable opposition to positive action in terms of mandatory quotas, although there is a target, which looks extremely

³ An ICM / Scotsman poll in March, 1994 found that voters in Scotland were solidly behind moves to increase the number of female politicians and believed their presence would make a difference: Question: Men are better at politics than women: Disagree 75%; Question: Not enough women are involved in politics. Agree 85%; Question: Governments would make better decisions if more women were involved in politics, Agree 72%; Political parties should make special efforts to involve more women . Agree 76%. Source: Scotsman 11.3.94)

⁴ For greater discussion of the 'gender gap' debate and the patterns of party political action around women's under-representation see Lovenduski and Norris (1989; 1993); Mackay (1990). For recent analysis of gender and voting in the 1992 general election see Norris (1993).

⁵ A 1988 MORI poll found that women were less likely than men to approve of Thatcherite values, with over half supporting the ideals of a socialist society (MORI/Weekend World/Sunday Times, June 1988, cited in a Fabian tract by D.Mattison and P.Hewitt, 1989). For a more measured examination of this argument and some notes of caution see Pippa Norris (1986a). However it is also worth noting that political parties do not need academic standards of proof before they act upon perceived trends.

unlikely to succeed, of fielding equal numbers of candidates in the next General Election.⁶ There is also a strong traditional 'difference' strand in Conservative thinking which equates with Duverger's notion of feminine ideology (1955), which gives women party members and organisations considerable influence in limited areas, particularly matters to do with the family. There is a tension between Conservatism which stresses women's traditional role and Neo-Liberalism within which equal rights to compete - particularly economically - are paramount (Campbell, 1987; Lovenduski and Randall, 1993).

The Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National parties also support equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome. Both parties stress gender-neutrality and argue that all individuals, including parents, will have a greater opportunity to participate in politics when a combination of electoral and institutional reforms are undertaken. There are women activists in both parties around equality of representation. A motion to introduce quotas for party positions within the SNP was defeated in 1992. The official view of the Scottish Nationals is that quota systems are 'discriminatory and patronising'. The SNP believes that, 'as a young party with accessible structures, it does not discriminate against women and seeks the best *person* for the job'.⁷

The Liberal Democrats however, accept the need for positive action to redress past inequalities. The Scottish Liberal Democrats have run what can be classed as liberal AA programmes, for example their women's training initiatives. In addition the Liberal Democrats inherited, from the SDP, a policy of mandatory shortlisting of one man and one woman on all their parliamentary lists. The third place is open to both sexes.⁸

⁶ Speaking in Opposition Debate on Women: 7 March 1995, Jean Corston (Labour MP for Bristol East) countered Conservative jibes about gesture politics (mandatory quotas) by saying: 'Is it not rich for a Conservative Member to criticise the Labour Party for ensuring that half our electoral representation will be women, when the vice chairman of the Conservative Party, (Dame Angela Rumbold) spends half her life trying to persuade Conservative associations around the country to select female candidates because there is a 50 per cent target in the Conservative Party for candidates at the next election?' (Hansard, 1995:154).

⁷ Telephone communication with SNP headquarters 31.5.95.

⁸ In the 1980s, the breakaway Social Democrat Party (SDP) was the first party to attempt to mobilise 'apolitical' women when it enshrined positive action in its constitution by ruling that every shortlist must include at least one woman and one man. In the 1983 general election the Alliance (The SDP and the Liberal Party) gained a percentage point more of women's votes than Labour. There was an 8 point gender gap (MORI/Cockburn, 1987).

The Labour party with a political goal of seeking social and economic equality as well as formal political equality and interventionist and redistributive traditions goes furthest of all four parties in moving towards equality of outcome. It has introduced quotas and targets within the party structure, and in 1994/1995 began implementing all-women shortlists in half of all vacant and marginal seats. However the issue of mandatory quotas has been the subject of intense internal debate and dissent; and all-women short lists were declared unlawful by an industrial tribunal in January 1996. Opponents of positive action do so on the grounds of 'merit', 'choice' and 'equality'.⁹ There is strong feminist organisation within the Labour Party, for example the National Women's Action Committee (NWAC) and, more recently, the Scottish Labour Women's Caucus. Activists tend to make claims based on equality rather than difference. Feminist activists in the Labour party and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) Women's Committee have been instrumental in introducing and championing gender equality in the new Scottish Parliament. (Levy, 1992; Brown 1995a).

There has been significant movement within the Scottish Liberal Democrats in terms of gender equality and representation. In March 1995 women from the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Labour Party proposed a formal electoral contract to progress a gender balance in the first elections of any Scottish Parliament.¹⁰

At personal level, women politicians will be influenced by their personal and political backgrounds and subsequent experiences; by common sense discourse; and by the experience of themselves and women colleagues including how good a 'fit' they feel there is between dominant ideologies and the concrete realities of their own lives.

Parties differ considerably in their understanding of representation and equality and in their commitment to action. However there are still significant commonalities

⁹ The opposition to the imposition of all-women short-leets was framed in terms of restricting the 'choice' of local parties (see *The Guardian*, 25.5.95); and unfairness to aspirant male candidates (see *The Guardian*, 9.1.96).

¹⁰ Press statement 'A New Vision for a Scottish Parliament', Scottish Liberal Democrats, March 10, 1995. For a detailed discussion of the negotiations see Brown (1995b).

amongst all parties, most notably notions of equality which minimise - or seek to eliminate difference. These notions are contested most within the Labour party where positions can be markedly polarised. Similarly the notion of impartial criteria and merit in terms of candidate selection is a dominant discourse in all four parties. The dominant discourse of equalities action is equal opportunities rather than equal outcome. Positive action is still largely characterised as 'unfair privileges' and is opposed by the Conservative and Scottish National parties; it is a difficult and contested notion within the Liberal Democrat Party; and, although has gained greater acceptance within the Labour Party is still opposed and resented by sections, including some women candidates and MPs.

Short agenda measures therefore, especially those which seek to eliminate discriminatory practices, or to increase the number of women entering the candidate pool, are likely to be most acceptable to women across party. However, short agenda measures which use positive action, for example special training and quotas, are likely to prove more difficult because of the tension between notions of merit and desirable outcomes.

Long Agenda measures, which invoke difference and challenge male hegemonic values, are in opposition to dominant discourses within all the parties but may resonate with the contradictions of women politicians lived realities. Women politicians, at the practical level, have to combine caring responsibilities with political lives and have to deal with the lack of 'fit' between their own lived realities and personal political agendas, and the dominant political discourses. However longer agenda measures are likely to cause problems in terms of, at an ideological level, finding the vocabulary to justify the type of radical political and cultural change needed in order to ensure women's equal access, presence and influence in political assemblies; and, on a practical level, in terms of political stomach for intervention.

Small steps, short agenda measures

The dominant approach in recruitment studies, and the dominant discourse for activists, is characterised by the 'short agenda'. Whilst this approach has had some successes, progress has been very slow. There are still very few women who get through. Pursuit of the short agenda benefits those women who are already

motivated to present themselves as 'aspirants', but who at present face a variety of barriers. Correctives are practical and probably, although not definitely, seen to be 'fair' by most political 'players'

Norris and Lovenduski's survey of parliamentary candidates in the 1992 British General Election found that there were high levels of support across party for measures such as party training for women; child care in parliament and change of parliamentary hours. There was markedly less support for all three measures from Conservative candidates. However whereas three quarters of Labour candidates, half of Liberal Democrats and 42% of Scottish National candidates supported quotas or other affirmative action, support amongst Conservatives dropped to 6%. Similarly Conservatives were least supportive of proposals to give financial assistance to women (Norris and Lovenduski 1995: 243). ¹¹

Most women in the current study (86%:45) support a range of short agenda measures, at both local and national level. The greatest support is for encouragement, training and some sort of child care provision or allowance, and, at local level, for councillors salaries. These are discussed in more detail below. In addition, 41.5% (22) spoke about the need for change to the political system or party structure, sometimes radical. This ranges from changes to the style and ethos of political parties, especially the way meetings are conducted, to the overhaul of local, but particularly, national assemblies. Women from all parties, but most notably from the Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP spoke about the need for decentralisation at all levels of government, and for the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. In addition some women, mostly Liberal Democrats, suggested that the reform of the electoral system and the introduction of some form of proportional representation would lead to more balanced representation of women and others. Some 12% of women felt there was either no action necessary or possible (4 Conservatives and 2 Liberal Democrats). One Liberal Democrat thought encouragement alone was sufficient or necessary.

¹¹ Table: 13.1 'Approval Of Proposals By Candidates'. Party training: Con (71%); Lab(97%); Lib Dem (92%); SNP (93%). Childcare in Parliament: Con (62%); Lab (99%); Lib Dem (98%); SNP (98%). Change Hours: Con (58%); Lab (92%); Lib Dem (95%); SNP (100%). Quotas /Affirmative Action: Con (6%); Lab (75%); Lib Dem (49%); SNP (42%). Financial Support for Women : Con (6%); Lab (59%); Lib Dem (32%) and SNP (47%). The findings are not broken down by gender.(Norris and Lovenduski, 1995:243)

However 39 % of interviewees (21) proposed a basket of measures, including a combination of some or all of the following : encouragement, training, 'shadowing', child care provision/allowances and councillors salaries. In addition, a further 43% (23) support a range of 'basket' measures plus the imposition of quotas. Support for quotas is limited to Labour women alone, with no support from other parties although a number of women from the Conservative and Scottish Nationalist parties expressed an understanding of the underlying frustration of Labour women.

Measures: encouragement

We question ourselves all the time and we don't look at half the numpties that are already there - that are men - and go, ' If he can do it ...' (Labour).

To recap the findings of the previous chapter, forty per cent of women cited lack of confidence as a reason why so few women come forward. This under-confidence or modesty was contrasted with men's generally high levels of assertion and feelings of 'can-do'. Encouragement was therefore seen as a key measure. Indeed some 90% perceived that to be the case. This would appear to be a short agenda measure, it was the least controversial measure or suggestion. Women councillors identified the need for political parties to encourage more women to consider politics: for instance to target community activists to become party members; and to encourage party members to become candidates for elected office at various levels. Confidence can be built by giving women hands-on experience within party structures. Scottish National Party councillor, Kim Nicoll talked about starting her political involvement by helping out at jumble sales, then delivering leaflets - then writing the leaflets and becoming press officer for her branch. She identifies an inclusive atmosphere and direct encouragement as important factors in building confidence:

In a way how it works in the SNP is haphazard [...]The party doesn't say, 'We want to have more women' but it's actually saying to people, 'We've confidence in you doing it'. And it works. And I think having women doing things so they can prove to themselves that they're capable of doing it and to continue that on , step by step by step. (Scottish National).

Strathclyde Labour councillor, May Smith, talked about the 'snowballing' process whereby if women are first encouraged to become active, their involvement escalates.

I have got a youth centre open in my area with Youth Challenge money - we've got funding for a development officer, but she can't do all the work on her own and we're going to need to have volunteers. Now I know where I can go to get them. I am taking Linda along to the local bingo meeting and I can guarantee we will find some volunteers, ordinary women I know who have all the skills they need to be politicians - they just need to do some voluntary work - and then it snowballs. (Labour).

This optimism must be tempered by the experience of other councillors who note that women active in community are often unable or unwilling to become involved in party or elected politics - largely because of family and time constraints, but also because of a sense of alienation and dissonance (see for instance Chapter 3 *passim*).

Several women talked in personal or general terms about the way women gain confidence through *role models* - seeing other women doing it - which would indicate that women perceive their presence to be of symbolic as well as substantive importance. Although, in common with several other women, the SNP's Kim Nicoll stresses she does not see herself as a 'standard bearer for women':

But I know that by being a woman it does help other women. When I got elected in '92, one of the first things I went to was a dinner for some business thing and a woman - who taught as a lecturer at business studies at the local college - told me when the young girls in her group heard [about election] they were really chuffed that somebody like them had won. And I thought, 'Oh yes, that's true'. And I'll go somewhere and someone will say 'Oh Kim, you're doing that - I know somebody who's a councillor!' It changes the whole kinda view of it - and you know that by being there you've changed things. (Scottish National).

A number of councillors discussed the impact of a visible presence of women in politics in challenging assumptions that politics is no place for a woman:

I think there is a generational thing, there is a societal thing as well. I think a lot of people who [...] if questioned would say they believe in having women politicians - but the reality is a bit daunting for them [...] I think women in politics have their role as examples that this does not have to be male activity - that this is *not* a male preserve. (Liberal Democrat).

A number of Labour women spoke about the way their own confidence, or the confidence of other women had been raised through involvement with women-only groups, particularly women's structures associated with the Labour party. Involvement with Labour Party or Trades Union women's groups appears to have

played a significant role in both promoting women's involvement in politics and in raising gender consciousness. Several women spoke of the encouragement and confidence they had received and the importance of women's support behind them.

With other women's encouragement you can find you can do a job. Somebody to say : 'Dinnae be so silly, you can do that - you *have* done that .' If it hadn't been for certain women, locally and at Scottish level, I wouldn't have done anything[...] Women have got to encourage one another because if we don't nobody else will care, especially not our male colleagues. (Labour).

In contrast, women from the other three parties did not, in general, discuss women's organisations as confidence-raising forums. Although encouragement appears to be the least problematic corrective, a short agenda measure with wide support there are still difficulties. Some women (across party) are uncomfortable about encouraging women more than men. This strict 'even-handed' tendency is discussed in greater detail below. Encouragement was seen as complex - with women identifying the need for changes in male behaviour both within relationships and within politics; and also linking encouragement with the issue of women's alienation from politics.

Measures: Training for women

About three-quarters of the women councillors interviewed support some form of special training initiatives for women. Most see the training in terms of confidence-building, rather than to correct any deficit of skills or experience.

Women will not just need the child care, they will need the training as well . I think it will take a lot longer for the kind of women, ordinary women, I want to see go into politics. Academic women, a lot of them have the training and a background, they can get in quicker. I feel there's a lot of work because ordinary women say, 'I won't be able to do it.' (Labour).

Partly by example, partly I think by [creating] a non threatening atmosphere - things like women-only training which would be a precursor to everybody being trained together, but it is a hurdle and you've got to get people [women] over the hurdle. (Liberal Democrat) .

But the idea of special training for women is not seen as wholly unproblematic. The Liberal Democrat councillor above characterises women-only training as a means of getting women over an initial hurdle to then join men at a level starting point. She makes distinction between what she calls positive action (her party's Scottish Women's Training Initiative) and other forms of action which she classifies as

positive discrimination. A number of other women were uncomfortable with the idea of special training, which they perceived as either demeaning to women, or unfair to men.

Cynthia Cockburn's illuminating research into the men's resistance to sex equality initiatives in organisations finds that women as well as men have ambivalent and contradictory attitudes towards equalities measures. Some women saw some *shorter* agenda measures, particularly training as tokenistic and unfair - but welcomed the idea of the *longest* agenda which promises transformatory change.

Positive discrimination in favour of individual women is unpopular with women, who feel obscurely, that it adds one more unfairness to an unfair organisation. Yet they welcome the idea of transformative change that could improve things, they believe, for both women and men (Cockburn, 1991: 216)

These themes are present also in the field of local politics; in the present study some women are resistant, for instance, to the idea of special training for women on the grounds of unfairness or tokenism - for example 'not for women anymore than for men'.

Why would women need special training ? Women should not be groomed to be councillors. Perhaps they should encourage people to see what it is like to be a councillor, but I wouldn't restrict that to women. (Liberal Democrat).

As in Cockburn's study, some women eschew what they see as 'special measures' for women but identify the need for more transformatory change. Whilst there is no doubt that sometimes this is a strategy for doing nothing (for instance there is no point pursuing immediate short agenda measures when what is needed is some vague and far distant transformation of female-male relations); however it also illustrates the difficulties many women have in dealing with contradictory notions of equality and difference.

For instance, the discussion of Liberal Democrat Alison Hay intertwines several themes. She starts off by appearing to argue that women have no need of positive action and invokes the discourse of merit and 'insulting' special treatment.

I think, if I was to be honest about the whole thing, I think women shouldn't necessarily need these things. [special training, women's sections etc] They

should be standing on their own merits. We're here because we are quite capable of doing the job - we don't need all this cottonwool wrapped round us and gently urged along the way - we'll get there under our own steam. And it's almost insulting, if you like, to say we need these things - these women's groups.

However she then develops her argument to suggest that it is men who need special measures in the form of some sort of 're-education' (a point made by several women). Therefore she appears to be pinpointing male resistance as a root cause to women's under-confidence - and their disadvantage as political players or aspiring politicians.

And perhaps it is men that need the education [...] I would really like to get the message home to them, somehow, that we are here because we are capable of doing the job: We have just as much mental capacity as they do; We're perfectly capable of following the same training as they do; And if only they would *back off slightly and let us in* - they would find us a great asset. [my italics]

Therefore although she alludes to discriminatory practices and attitudes which currently disadvantage women, she eschews the short agenda measure of training as unnecessary (women will get there under their own steam), unfair (women should stand on their own merits) and demeaning (to women): instead she supports the idea of (future) transformatory change through the challenging of male attitudes and male behaviour. However there is little sense of how and when this is going to be achieved. The problem (of men's resistance) is not directly characterised as an equalities issue. There is an emphasis on fair play in terms of women not asking for, or being granted special favours, however there is an incipient, more radical critique, in the imputed observation that men don't always 'play by the rules'.

Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Scottish Nationals were more likely to find training a problem than Labour women, although some Labour women were also concerned about what they saw as particularity. A minority of Conservatives specifically supported women's training, but a majority of women do see training, allied with encouragement, as key factors in dealing with aspirant women and potential aspirants lack of confidence or socially-constructed and reinforced modesty.

Measures : Child care

Just as a majority of interviewees identify family responsibilities as a major inhibiting factor to women's political activism, especially in political parties and elected decision making bodies, so almost all the interviewees suggest the provision of child care is an important key to facilitating women's entry into politics. Ninety-four percent of interviewees said that the provision of child care was an issue of some importance at both local and Westminster level. Several women repeated the observation that the House of Commons has a shooting gallery but no crèche.

Some advocated specific measures for women politicians, but many more saw the issue as part of a broader campaign for better child care provision across the community (mixture of short agenda and long agenda). Child care was an issue which had strong support across party, although women (largely but not solely by party) had a range of preferred policy solutions for example state provision versus market provision.

I think we ought to make it as simple as we can for women to be assisted with child care. It's a very lonely business bringing up children and many young women can feel quite isolated - so I think child care is crucial. I would actually give tax relief to employers to open crèches and nurseries on their premises, and this is something I've been looking at for years and years and years - and it was one of my election platforms in 1974. (Conservative).

Daycare provision for little ones should be much more accessible, I would go to the extent of having nursery provision as a statutory provision. It would open the door for more women to take a more active role in whatever they want to - whether it be work, politics or whatever. (Scottish National).

The majority of women councillors (91%: 48) are married, or have been married.¹² Eighty three per cent have had dependent children at some stage of their elected political career. In addition, 9% (5) specified they have other care commitments in the form of for instance, elderly parents and grandchildren. Some 28% (15) are currently caring for at least one dependent child and 7.5% (4) have teenaged children; a further 34% (18) had young or teenaged children at some stage of their time on the council. Four women are currently single parents with dependent children.

¹² 17% are separated or divorced and 4 per cent widowed Only nine per cent (5) have never married

A number of women advocated the need for a carer's allowance to enable aspirants to combine politics with the care of a sick or elderly relative. Discussion of child care was complex and overlapped with political agendas although it is identified as an important issue on many personal agendas. There are a mixture of approaches, some see a simple solution - others see the issue of child care as problematic and link it to wider issues of sexual division of labour. Several women saw the provision of child care as an across-the-board- issue, rather than a concern specific to aspirant women politicians.

Once you actually introduce a reasonably broad child care system you then open access to women to actually earn money as well . So it's not just that they can have their children looked after while they are involved in politics or go to political meetings or represent political constituencies; but you also give them access to the job opportunities that allow them to gain domestic help or whatever else they need. So, fundamentally, child care opens a lot more doors than just the political door - because once you open that particular door you actually start dealing with a whole range of the barriers. (Labour).

Most women stressed the need for variety and flexibility in terms of provision, whether state or market-led solutions were preferred.

I would have been absolutely devastated if I had been in the position ever to have to take my kids out at eight in the morning down to a day centre while I went away and scrubbed some floor somewhere; come back at five or half past five and literally put them to bed. I would have really found that very distressing, I know the day centres are good but I wouldn't have wanted to use them. So if I had been in the position of full time working, say if I'd been bright and been a lawyer, I would have wanted a nanny in the house and tax relief. I would have wanted my kids brought up in their own home and in their own community. (Conservative).

Several women argued that child care has to be seen as an issue for men as well, and that fathers needed to take on some responsibility. However, a number of women have doubts about women combining the care of young children with council work. Some, although not all, of those who express reservations do not approve of child care in general, nor of working mothers. They tended to be older women and fairly traditional in their views about other issues as well.

If you have a young family - I think nobody who has children under ten or twelve should take it up.(Scottish National).

The councillor made it clear later in her interview that she does not extend her 'ban' to men with young families. Others spoke from a concern about the time demands

of combining the care of children with a political life and a rational assessment of the need for a good support network rather than prescriptive outlook.

It's very difficult [to combine bringing up a family with council work] because what a lot of people do not realise is that you are at the beck and call of the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year; and there are times when you've got to drop whatever you're doing and go out there and deal with whatever the problems are. My family weren't 'young' young, they were able to see to themselves if problems arose. But if you have a good husband and family support there's no reason why you can't do it. (Scottish National).

I have tried to encourage younger women in the party to take part [...] but I find myself divided too [...] knowing that for women with young children for instance - the demands that greater involvement is going to put on them. Am I justified in actually trying to push them to do it? And how hard do you push? (Liberal Democrat).

Some women, like Tayside Regional Labour councillor, Donna Dingwall, herself a single parent, argued that if women councillors push for child care for themselves, it will be seen as a 'perk' by the public.

It's difficult because elected members are always getting criticised in the press - people assume that we're all on the gravy train, they assume we're all getting this that and the next thing. I'm on Family Credit because I dinnae have enough to live off - half the folk wouldn't understand that. We need a decent wage, a wage and obviously child care - but you're wary of saying that because folk think, 'Oh aye, it's braw for them - I work and I cannae get my bairn watched. It is an issue, but I don't know how we'd handle it. (Labour).

This Liberal Democrat expressed a very much minority view that although child care was important she would not accept it was legitimate for the council to make provision for women councillors:

Certainly child care facilities are important - I'm quite happy if people are willing to pass the care of their children to someone else as long as the provision is excellent. There isn't enough child care but I would be *totally opposed* to the council setting it up for councillors. (Liberal Democrat).

The issue of 'special treatment' was countered in several discussions by women councillors who argued that short agenda child care measures specifically for councillors are needed in order to increase the presence of younger women with families in elected politics. They can then campaign to raise the priority of child care provision as a community-wide issue (the longer agenda). Child care was characterised as a measure which would not only benefit individual women but would act as a catalyst for greater change.

I think we've got to open some sort of child care facility or some sort of payment structure. If that was the case, I wouldn't like to be seen as any different to working women in the community, the whole aspect of child care has to be on the agenda to open it up to the broader community. But to help women in the community by providing child care - you have to get more women into politics so they can get women's views over! (Labour).

An 'even-handedness' was also apparent within discussion on child care, with several women noting that child care would help male colleagues with children and would encourage fathers into politics. A small number of women used only men in their discussion of the need for child care.

More child care should be supplied generally for working parents because there are more and more single men involved in single parent families. (Conservative).

This may reflect the difficulty women have in seeming to be advocating 'mothers privileges', despite the wealth of evidence that it is mothers, not fathers that are in reality disadvantaged by family responsibilities in terms of both work and politics. (Barron et al, 1991; Brannen and Moss, 1991).

Measures : Paying the rate for the job

Almost three-quarters of interviewees believed that the introduction of councillors' salaries would be an effective measure in increasing the number of women into local politics. Councillor's salaries were seen as an effective solution to many of the difficulties of access. However there were also reservations: a small number of women felt it would impact negatively on the public service underpinnings of local politics; that it would attract 'the wrong sort'; others worried that salaries would lead to the professionalisation of local politics - or rather exacerbate the trend. One Labour councillor remarked she had been turned down at one local selection because she was not a professional. 'You couldnae do it because you're no a social worker'. A number of interviewees, like Edinburgh District Liberal Democrat, Moyra Forrest, are reluctant to break the link between council duties and the world of work.

It's partially attractive and partially not. I personally don't favour full-time councillors - I don't fancy removing people from the people they are serving. And I get so much feedback [...] from the people I work with and people I

socialise with. I feel it could become very sterile to be in a council all the time. (Liberal Democrat).

However most women emphasise that council work is a job and should be paid as such.

There is just the possibility that my husband [...] is going to be made redundant [...] If I am at least earning something like a reasonable salary, the impact on us as a family would not be so great. But as far as just being a councillor is concerned I don't see why I shouldn't get paid the rate for the job - I put in long hours and great effort. I'm available at the end of a telephone no matter what the time is - and there's a lot of it that isn't seen by the public: reports that you've got to read and write about ; all the stuff you do at home or in the office; the letters you do. They just see the public side of it when you go out to a meeting or you meet a group or whatever .(Liberal Democrat).

Councillors salaries were least problematic in terms of 'special pleading' because it was a measure which applies to women and men. Several women saw councillors salaries as negating the need for child care allowances because people could pay for child care out of their earnings. Only one woman, a Liberal Democrat who elsewhere had opposed any positive action in favour of women, arguing that women ' already get a pretty good deal' - discussed the idea that councillor's salaries should reflect the greater 'cost' of political service to women.

As regards salary, if women councillors can manage to be in on time and attend the same number of meetings as the men do - I think they should be paid twice as much. Because they've got the housework and everything else to see to before they come in here. So your day starts at half past seven, you get the family off to work. The men swan in here about five to ten, having been fed and watered and cleaned and what have you - and get the same amount. So I think women councillors, if they do want to come onto the council, should be paid more than men - now that may be a feminist kind of a view, but it's the way I feel about it. (Liberal Democrat).

Alienation and closure: 'Women just can't be bothered with it'

The pursuit of the short agenda and the marginalisation of other discourses has resulted in a sense of closure in terms of progressing both the debate and the reality of women's representation in political elites. This has been the case particularly around issues of fairness and central questions of male power; how to make politics more inclusive and more relevant to women - the 'long agenda' project of transformatory change. A number of women spoke about the way politics alienates women.

Women just can't be bothered with all this back-stabbing and going into little corners etc. Women tend to be - and this is a generalisation obviously - but women tend to be more up front and say what they mean ... and I think it does put women off. (Labour).

I think until [caring] work is equally valued you won't get the change [...] in the way that politics is organised. The adversarial, confrontational systems are systems that have been established by men . I would like to see other ways of doing things tried - to see if we can work differently. Maybe we can't, maybe they would have to be modified, but unless we actually try them we will never know. And I think that a lot of this is what keeps women away from politics - because they see it as something they don't want to be involved in. [They see it] as confrontational, adversarial, as full of corruption, dishonesty, slanging the other chap and all the rest of it and they just think 'I don't want this'. (Liberal Democrat).

It is also clear that in many cases thinking about progressing women is blocked by a lack of alternative common sense about equality - the way in which many women feel they have to make a choice between love and politics - that is to decide on political participation on men's terms or to save their energies for family life. This leads to a strand of biological fatalism.

Someone asked me if I was optimistic and I said, No, I really am not. Sometimes I despair of the fact that women like me who have worked so hard for so long and have made such a little impression on these male dominated structures in society. But I don't think legislation is going to change it, I honestly don't. Not as long as you have the biological function of the woman which whether she chooses to marry and/or have children or not is still an inescapable factor in this whole business. (Conservative).

Feminism, which is rejected by many of the women interviewed, is often defined as a strict equality feminism - 'they want women to be men' which is perceived to be at the cost of many aspects of life women value. Alternatively, policies to improve the status of women are seen as particularist, as special pleading which cannot be reconciled with conventional notions of justice and fairness.

I feel everyone should be equal whatever their sex. I don't see why women should be more equal than men. Positive discrimination for women is to discriminate against men. I have nothing against equal opportunities, I think it's terribly important - I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, I was given opportunities. But I don't think people should be forced to be equal. Some people are high achievers, others are not. (Conservative).

Thinking about Quotas

The greatest unease at tokenism is to be found in the debate over quotas. Women who argue for the desirability - even urgent necessity - for women to enter political arenas in greater numbers cannot bring themselves to support a mechanism for achieving that change. Yet they are supportive of the idea of a social transformation which would bring women's values into play. Indeed it is sometimes striking how women politicians argue a preference for inequality as it is now constructed rather than applying a remedy which they believe is particularist.

I don't think positive discrimination will work, and I think the Labour party - which is going for this, at least in part, is going to find that. I don't know what else will work, mind you - but certainly I don't think positive discrimination will. (Conservative).

Cockburn says the women she interviewed wanted 'full and fair representation' in their organisations but had difficulty in accepting measures which were seen to benefit individual women.(1991:216-217). Her focus was not to investigate why women are unwilling to ally themselves with positive discrimination, but rather on the patterns of men's resistance. However there are several clues and emerging discussions from her research. She outlines the ambivalence women feel about being granted 'mother's privileges' which men both resent but also offer in order to underline and delimit women as 'unreliable' workers (for example, maternity leave, career breaks, part-time working etc) She also stresses the limited nature of men's support (if any) for equality measures which is characterised by a regard for the shortest agenda only.

I would argue that men's construction of positive discrimination as 'privilege' which reinforces women as 'other' and delegitimises them as either *real* workers or, in the case of my study, *real* political actors are powerful discourses which police women and constrain their actions and their understanding. These discourses also resonate with hegemonic interpretations of fairness - equality of opportunity, rather than equality of outcome. Feminist and Strathclyde Labour councillor, Jeanette Timmins explains the difficulty of presenting positive action in an arena where it is perceived as discrimination against men. She is discussing the reaction of men in the Labour party to the imposition of women-only short leets.

I would say that the majority of men don't accept that - they think that women ought to be there on their own merits and they shouldn't be discriminating in favour of women because they see that as a discrimination *against men*. And they can't seem to realise that women have other hurdles, other barriers, that they need to get over before they can actually *think* about joining either the council or becoming an MP or whatever. (Labour).

At present the needs of equality are obscured by both dominant and common sense notions of fairness and unfairness; so that moves to promote effective equal opportunities can lead to resentment by those who, currently, have a marginal advantage. There is a need for affirmative action, but a need for it to be seen as 'fair', otherwise this leads to paralysis and backlash.¹³ Annie Steveley, a Labour councillor in Aberdeen is a supporter of mandatory quotas although she worries that the sense of resentment and backlash they cause might make them counter-productive.

It really does cause an awful lot of ill feeling, the reason given is that this is inhibiting lots of clever young men. There is undoubtedly an ingrained suspicion that women might get pregnant or do womanly things instead of running countries. It's because people really don't see inequality. Men don't see it - a lot of other women don't see it either. It's an awful difficult thing to describe or discuss [...] I find I just don't do it now; just don't want to talk about it. It comes down to men saying, 'But I wash the dishes!' - that's what it's reduced to and once in people's minds it's reduced to that, they don't see inequality. It's a baffling thing to them and, like anything else you don't understand, you're afraid of it and you resist. They genuinely don't see the need for it. (Labour).

In this study there was no support for quotas by women from political parties other than Labour, and a great deal of opposition to quotas from some Labour women on much the same grounds, as unfairness (to men), unworkability, and patronising to women. Indeed many supporters of quotas in this study could not easily find the language of legitimacy in which to couch their support or advocacy for quotas. There was a sense in interviews of the legitimacy of formal equality but not contextualised equality. An equality which takes difference into account tended to be construed as partial. Even among those who supported quotas, few forwarded an argument which characterised quotas as 'fair' rather than expedient.

¹³ There has been a particularly acute white backlash or 'whitelash' in the United States against AA programmes which promote women and black men. (*The Guardian*, 13.6.95)

I think the idea of the women-only short lists has been necessary. It's a pity it's been necessary but I don't think there are any other ways which work apart from positive discrimination. (Labour).

I have to say I have always been resistant to quotas, always felt that it was kind of degrading in some way for a woman to have any suggestion hanging over her head that she was only there to make up the quota. On the other hand now being involved, you realise that [...] we need something more positive to encourage women in. (Labour).

The idea of having more women - everybody nods it through, but when it comes down to doing it - unless it is enforced, then it won't happen. We do sadly need some sort of big stick in order to enforce it. (Labour).

In addition there is also a recognition, amongst both supporters of quotas and non-supporters, that some of the measures to increase the number of women in politics would benefit atypical women and there is a need for a more radical restructuring to include a wide cross-section of women - and marginalised groups of men, ie. the long agenda. Thus some women construe quotas as a contentious but short agenda measure. Labour councillor, Jeannette Timmins:

It's restricted, I mean I don't work, I don't have a full-time job so therefore I've got time to do this. My husband has a fairly OK job. If I was working full-time I would probably be getting three or four times what I am getting now, but I enjoy doing it and I can do it. I think it is difficult for women who need to work to be able to do this; I think it is difficult for women who have young kids - there is no crèche provision, there is no child care provision for councillors to be able to do this; I think it is difficult for women who are looking after elderly relatives to be able to do this; so there are huge barriers that face women in their daily lives, just getting on with the business of living and keeping the family going without saying, 'Well, I'll be a councillor as well.' I mean it's hectic, I neglect my family something awful, but they can cope with that - I hope they can cope with it [laugh] but a lot of women can't do that so there are huge barriers they have to overcome. (Labour).

Another Strathclyde Regional Councillor, Yvonne Robertson argued that atypical women, like herself, who are already involved in politics, benefit from positive action; but measures don't increase the number of women entering the pool of eligibles in the first place.

The Labour Party have got it wrong in my view, not that I don't think we should continue with positive action in terms of women parliamentary candidates and women candidates in general - but that will only benefit women like me. It doesn't really benefit anyone else and what I think we need to do is to broaden out what we are about. Now women in the tenant's associations, in the pre-five groups, in the pensioners' groups - every single group I can think about in my constituency, almost without exception, share my views - Now why are they

not joining the Labour party ? because the political parties in my view are not user-friendly organisations. (Labour).

Yvonne Allan, an Aberdeen District Labour councillor, sees the implementation of quotas as a short agenda measure which does not tackle the long agenda - the long term dismantling of discriminatory structures and thinking.

You see, I'm no sure where I stand on quotas because I think it has to go hand in glove with this the whole thinking process . I think it is very easy - the easy way out - to say:

'Fifty/fifty, aren't we good? We agree with equality'. Forty/sixty, fifty/fifty - whatever line they draw. ' We're for women, we're for equality, we've done it, we've achieved it.'

Absolute rubbish! Because it's the easy way out - if they forgot about the numbers game and were prepared to say 'OK oor thinking is changing, we're prepared to think about the *barriers* to politics for *everybody* ', because there *are* barriers to certain men, disabled, black, gay whatever - and the thinking was, 'We want to be open access.' I would rather that happened instead. (Labour).

The introduction of quotas may promote , but does not guarantee gender parity in political elites. Women would still have hard decisions to make with regards to their caring responsibilities; and a great number of able women would make a rational assessment that they do not have the time resources to combine work, love and politics as it is currently constituted. Therefore quotas may only benefit atypical women who have few caring responsibilities or have sufficient resources to pay for their caring work to be done by others. To be sure, some women will be motivated enough, as at present, to do a double or treble shift, but they will remain disadvantaged political players.

Men and political parties would therefore be able to pay lip service to equality and the problem is individualised. Women and their 'baggage' , that is, their children, their elderly parents, their homes and their relationships, are problematised - rather than dominant values and existing care-blind structures which serve to exclude. The result may well remain that of women fitting the system, rather than changing the system to achieve a better fit for women. Women who are most like men, in terms of having few caring responsibilities or having the financial resources to pay for care, can be advanced in a gender-neutral system ; other women have the 'choice' of coping with competing demands or, perhaps the more rational decision of electing not to engage.

Amongst women from all parties, whether they support or oppose quotas there are problems in constructing acceptable strategies for change. Some women see the problem of women's under-representation solved by improved child care and allowances. But many more see the problem as deeper than that. The issues of family/caring responsibility and the resistance of men are seen as complex and intractable problems by many women.

There is a need to think about care, families and their relation to the polity; to re-characterise difference and equality. Many of the women councillors in this study had difficulty in, as Liberal Democrat Veronica Crerar put it, working out, 'how to get from *here* to *there*'. The 'here' is the male dominated, women-unfriendly structures and practices of politics as currently constituted which impede women's access; disadvantage them in terms of presence; and undermine their influence. The 'there' is a politics transformed. By no means a uniform or uncontested vision, but one which, across party, speaks of a politics which is open, inclusive, and which embodies female as well as male values, needs and interests for the benefit of all.

Democracy theorist Anne Phillips, a staunch advocate of quotas, accepts that quotas 'may be a case of dealing with the symptoms rather than tackling the underlying cause.' (1993:106). She highlights three reasons underlying women's under representation in decision-making assemblies: firstly, the sexual division of labour in both the productive and reproductive spheres; secondly, the working conditions in decision-making assemblies are premised on unencumbered individuals; and thirdly the prejudice of selectors. Thus she argues the worlds of work and family need to be restructured, and the decision-making assemblies should be reformed to allow parents to combine politics and caring responsibilities. Finally she argues that quotas must be introduced to achieve gender parity of representation: "The importance feminists currently attach to the third (quotas) reflects our sadly realistic assessment of the time it will take to alter the first two' (1993:106).

Strathclyde Labour councillor Neelam Bakshi - Scotland's first ethnic minority female councillor - argues that, as a short-term, short agenda measure, quotas are necessary and expedient. However reformers must not lose sight of the long agenda of transformatory change.

I don't see any other way of achieving things in the short-term unless you had a massive culture change which it doesn't look like it's happening. But I

am clear that I don't see this as something I would want to see continue on a permanent basis either. If you use quotas and all-women shortlists to get in women who are simply going to *perpetuate* a system - that doesn't actually have a culture shift in it, then I can't see the point [...] And that's where the difficulty lies, because if you have a quota system - it's men making selections! (Labour).

Anne Phillips advocates quotas to achieve parity for women in political decision-making assemblies (1991, 1993). However she also underlines the need for ideological alternatives to dominant discourses when she speaks of need for a project to make 'transparent' the needs of equality, in order, 'To avoid the deafness of resentment' (1993: pp.19 -20). It is clear, using her own logic, that further work is needed to challenge existing conceptions of equality. Quotas cause discord and dissent, and supporters have a defence of quotas restricted to claims that they are expedient and they will get results. Unfortunately neither of these defences tap into commonsense notions of fairness nor do they challenge existing notions of criteria. Even liberal affirmative action measures like women's training cause some resentment.

Gender and criteria

The challenge to the social and political construction of merit and suitability, argued by Webb and Liff in terms of employment, may offer a possible bridge between short and long agendas in politics. Equal opportunities and positive action measures are both shorter equality agendas because they share an acceptance of the legitimacy of *suitability* criteria. Webb and Liff argue that within organisations the construction of suitability criteria rests upon deeply gendered notions of job content, requisite skills and experiences (1988).

Dex and Shaw's (1986) survey on the impact of 'liberal' equal opportunities policies on the occupational status of women in Britain and North America concludes that equal opportunities helps those women whose socio economic profile and career pattern most resembles men. The growing gap between a minority of full-time professional women (with uninterrupted careers, or the minimum of time off, without children or with the resources to buy child care) and the vast majority of other women has also been noted by several researchers (Humphries and Rubery,1995; Innes, 1995). In Australia, feminists have challenged the whole construct of equal opportunities programmes which fail to take account

of sexual difference (Thornton, 1986; Pateman and Grosz, 1986). This has led Marilyn Lake to assert: 'Equal Opportunities has become equal opportunism.' (1986:146). Webb and Liff (1988) argue that such limited change is inherent in the dominant liberal model of equal opportunity.

In this study, women councillors identify the gendered structure of merit when they speak about the ideal candidate syndrome (Chapter 3); they also identify the remnants of patronage especially through the networking of business and trades unions.

Within the affirmative action model there is insight that there are inequalities which mean that not all players may equally compete (for example because of individual prejudice, or the lingering affects of discriminatory educational practices etc). However there is no serious challenge to the construction of merit. Thus the debate about quotas has centred upon the justice of outcome without challenging the construction of merit and concrete realities of difference, in particular the sexual division of labour.

It is the long agenda model which challenges the gendered (and raced) structure of suitability for jobs. In politics, this would expose the current inequalities which rest on seemingly neutral and objective candidate criteria as, in fact, advantaging men. This challenge would deconstruct the job of a politician - what they do and the skills required. The model requires the recognition of difference and the transformation of definitions of merit. In envaluing different criteria, it would require the transformation of political institutions to reflect and accommodate the different circumstances, experiences, needs and values of women.

Summary

Discussion of measures to increase the number of women in local and national politics takes place within a political and organisational framework which privileges formal equality and which minimises the concrete reality of gendered lives. Although there is recognition of continuing unequal access to power, both liberal and radical affirmative action models privilege existing male-defined norms and constructions of merit. Affirmative action measures are characterised as unfair, illegitimate and regarded as redistributive whether liberal or radical in origin.

There is broad agreement about many practical measures to tackle the under-representation of women: most notably encouragement, training, child care and, in the case of local politics, councillor salaries. In addition, many women argued for changes in working hours and conditions, particularly at Westminster, and the establishment of a Scottish parliament. However, there was also recognition of the need for societal change particularly to the gendered division of labour. There was a sense of closure in many of the discussions, emanating from a distaste for 'unfair privileges' and dominant constructions of justice and equality which stress sameness not difference.

Although many women councillors expressed a preference for what Cockburn has termed the long agenda project of transformatory change there are considerable difficulties in constructing acceptable strategies for change. The challenge to gendered constructs of political criteria may offer a bridge between discourses of equality and difference. It is only by challenging criteria that women will stop being problematised and the political system, and the unequal power relations embedded within, can be exposed as the problem. There is a need to identify and develop marginal discourses around gender justice and the politics of care. It is only by introducing elements of gendered justice at both ends of the debate - the lack of women in decision-making bodies is a justice crisis; the inequality of families is a justice crisis - that the needs of equality are made more transparent. These themes will be further examined in the following chapter which will examine some contemporary feminist thinking around justice, gender and the family; and the political ethics of care.

5 Justice, Maternal Thinking and the Political Ethic of Care

Until there is justice within the family, women will not be able to gain equality in politics, at work, or in any other sphere (Moller Okin, 1989: 4)

Introduction

In this chapter I seek to take the debate about recruitment and representation forward by examining some recent feminist theoretical works to assess what strategic and practical insights they offer. Recent contributions about gender and justice (Moller Okin, 1989), maternal thinking (Ruddick, 1989) and care as a political ethic (Tronto, 1993) are discussed. The paradox of domestic and caring labour, observed in the thesis so far, is that women politicians perceived it to be both a barrier and a resource. Gendered realities serve to expose the shortcomings of formal constructions of equal opportunities and equal treatment; women also place a high value upon care as an idea and an activity; and many argue that values and skills which arise from women's experience as carers are useful and desirable in local and national politics. Similarly, the work of the writers in this chapter both highlights the relationship between the sexual division of labour and gendered disadvantage; and also seeks to envalue care. All three writers critically draw upon Carol Gilligan's (1982) hugely influential study, in which she appeared to have found evidence of parallel but different moral reasoning in women. This reasoning was seen as more contextual, more rooted in ties of relationships and was named a 'Different Voice'. Gilligan suggested that men are more concerned with abstract rights and formal rules which results in an ethic of justice; whereas women are concerned with responsibilities and inter-personal relationships which results in an ethic of care.¹

¹ Gilligan's 'In A Different Voice' has engendered a huge literature from both supporters and critics. In particular, there has been vigorous debate as to how different the 'Different Voice' really is; and whether the ethic of care is necessarily gendered. Although many of Gilligan's original findings have subsequently been revised, nevertheless the 'Different Voice' continues to evoke a response from, even sceptical, feminists. Judith Evans explains its appeal as that of a 'mythic truth' (1995: 101). Within this chapter, Sara Ruddick is the most uncritical; whilst Susan Moller Okin and Joan Tronto both have substantive reservations about Gilligan's work. For a useful overview of some of the debates see Tronto (1987, 1993) and Moller Okin (1989, 1990).

The chapter first examines Susan Moller Okin's critique of justice, and her discussion of the requirements for a just society. A new discourse of gender justice which emerges from her work is outlined. The work of care theorists, particularly that of Sara Ruddick and Joan Tronto is then discussed. The latter works are broadly positioned within 'difference feminism', and have provoked much controversy in both 'mainstream' political thought and within the feminist academy. This chapter does not seek to evaluate the work of these writers on a theoretical level, rather it explores the concepts and arguments as potential sites in which new directions and new understandings may be found; and where alternative political discourses may be produced. The potential political application of their insights, and the introduction of a vocabulary of care are highlighted as suggestive strategic alternatives.

Justice Gender and the Family

Susan Moller Okin labels the equal distribution of household labour as, 'The great revolution that has not happened' (1989: 4). Whilst women have entered paid employment in greater numbers, this has not been mirrored by an increase in men sharing household labour and the care of children. Even in Scandinavia, where equality between the sexes is highly advanced, women do most housework; men take less parental leave. Women are problematised and penalised, in employment and in politics, because of their caring responsibilities. There is a sense in which domestic arrangements are still seen as a voluntarist agreement, an individual problem, and solutions tend to be characterised in terms of, for instance, the provision of child care. It is not generally dignified as *a crisis of justice*. Yet women's caring and family responsibilities are singled out by many theorists and female politicians themselves as the single most important barrier to women's full political participation (see Chapter 3). Democracy theorist, Anne Phillips comments:

As long as the sexual distribution of labour allocates for women the main responsibility for caring for others the time left over for political engagement is necessarily reduced. (1993:15).

Moller Okin contrasts democratic values of justice and equality with the economic realities of women's lives in the United States: low wages; large wage differentials;

the poverty of single mothers and their children; the poverty of elderly women; and women's under-representation in politics and the judiciary. This would be equally true of British society and most of the so-called developed nations (see, for example: Rubery, 1988; Glendinning and Millar, 1992; Humphries and Rubery, 1995; Engender, 1993, 1994, 1995).

Moller Okin places the unequal division of family and household labour at the root of social, economic and political inequality; and argues that until there is gender justice in the family, women will be unable to gain equality in work, politics or any other area of public life. To underscore the gender basis for the unequal division of labour, Moller Okin looks at research on couples in the United States by Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz. They found that gay couples and lesbian couples were highly unlikely to replicate heterosexual patterns of household labour and were, in general, far more likely to have egalitarian domestic arrangements.²

Power relations within the family and the workplace (which both assume a male breadwinner) replicate and reinforce each other. *Gendered marriage* makes women *vulnerable*, contends Moller Okin. They are made more vulnerable when they have children; and their vulnerability 'peaks' with the breakdown of marriages. Indeed, various studies provide conclusive evidence of the gendered impact of marriage breakdown whereby women and children are impoverished by divorce, whilst men tend to benefit financially, or recover their former position in a relatively short period.³

Moller Okin charts the ways in which the conflict for women between love and work sets them up to be vulnerable: firstly, socialisation which leads women to expect to be the primary caretakers of children; secondly, in fulfilling that role women need to attract and keep the economic support of a man - and give priority to his working life; and thirdly, that sex segregation within employment cancels out the educational advances of women in many cases - particularly in administrative and support jobs, where pay is lower than comparable male jobs, and in which prospects for promotion are limited. Moller Okin characterises these features as *vulnerability by anticipation of marriage*. She argues that this phenomenon impacts

² American Couples' study cited by Moller Okin (1989: 140).

³ Moller Okin, 1989: Chapter 7. For US research see for example, Weitzman (1985); for British research see for example, Glendinning and Millar (1992); Wasoff and Morris (1996).

on women whether they marry or not; and whether or not future support from a male breadwinner is a realistic option (Moller Okin, 1989:142-146).

Moller Okin is one of the first theorists to characterise the sexual division of labour in the family - and the resultant inequalities in employment and public life - as a major problem for political and social theory. It is, she suggests, a *gender crisis of justice*. Justice is, she argues, about whether, how and why people should be treated differently. She asks why, therefore, the gendered injustice within families has not been tackled by social justice theorists. Instead most justice theorists have ignored gender and contemporary gender issues - and seem to have bypassed feminist scholarship and insight in a 'remarkable case of neglect' (Moller Okin, 1989:8).⁴ For example, in the work of contemporary justice theorist John Rawls, no mention is made of justice within families:

Family life is not only assumed, but it is assumed to be just - and yet the prevalent gendered division of labor within the family is neglected, along with the associated distribution of power, responsibility and privilege. (Moller Okin, 1989:9).

Moller Okin's critique has important implications for theories of justice. Firstly by arguing that relations between the sexes is a matter of justice, she exposes the way that contemporary formulations of justice - even 'progressive' social justice theorists like Rawls are unable to deal with injustices arising out of gender, for example the 'feminisation' of poverty and the relative exclusion of women from politics and the judiciary. Secondly, Moller Okin contends that justice without the contextuality of care is incomplete. As such, her critique demands a reframing of justice to incorporate the reality of gendered lives which she proposes by developing a feminist 'reading' of Rawls; which advocates an engaged, rather than a detached standpoint. By this she means that justice cannot be an abstract 'view from nowhere', but must be attentive to the points of view of women as well as the points of view of men (p179-180).

This presents a fundamental challenge to disembodied notions of justice. However, what is important in terms of the debates in this chapter, is the framework for an

⁴ Moller Okin cites the work of: Bruce Ackerman; Ronald Dworkin; Alasdair MacIntyre; Robert Nozick; Roberto Unger and John Rawls as all deficient in this crucial respect.

emerging justice and gender discourse. I would argue there are three potential features to a new justice and gender discourse: firstly, that women's domestic and caring responsibilities - and men's resistance to doing their fair share - is re conceptualised as a *crisis of justice* with far-reaching social, economic and political consequences; secondly, that the sexual division of labour would be recast as a concern of social justice in need of remedy and therefore there would be recognition of the need for *political action*. Thirdly, that inequalities in the family would not be characterised as an individualised problem of women's choice, but instead be explained by a complex of structural injustices. For instance, Moller Okin shows that gendered marriages obscure the structural inequalities behind seemingly rational decisions.⁵

Why then is the 'justice crisis' of which Moller Okin speaks given such scant regard by feminist political scientists, and feminist activists? There are, perhaps, understandable reasons for reluctance to engage in this debate. Firstly, there are difficulties in conceptualising the sexual division of labour as a mainstream political issue - in liberal feminist terms it is explained as a remnant of traditional social conditioning which will change in time. Secondly, it is difficult to tackle the issues practically. For instance, how could legislation be framed to require that men did their share of caring work? Therefore feminists have tended to concentrate upon means of supporting women with, for example, demands for improved child care provision. Thirdly, the sexual division of labour can be easily interpreted as choice. Because women recognise and value their caring work, it can be viewed that they, as women, *choose* to have children and *choose* spend time with their families. Fourthly, because women are allowed entry on 'men's terms', changes which take account of women's needs and experiences are de-legitimised as special pleading. Male politicians ridicule women politicians attempts to raise issues of housework or child-care responsibility. Therefore women politicians and candidates are themselves reluctant to complain too publicly, for fear that it is seen as 'bleating', or that it reinforces 'victim' stereotypes.

The idea of a justice crisis of gender is important in its contribution towards constructing a discourse which reframes women's common sense complaints as

⁵ For a discussion of how the gap in earning potential, and therefore decision-making power, widens during the course of a relationship through 'rational decisions' see Moller Okin (1989: Chapter 7).

rational demands for action springing from concerns of justice. However practical difficulties remain, not least exploring a mechanism for change. Although Moller Okin does place value on nurturing, her major focus is upon disadvantage rather than the claims that women's experience of care may result in distinctive values, perspectives and resources. It is to this debate that the chapter now turns.

Womanly virtues and women's values

The idea that there are distinctive women's values and a woman's morality, associated in particular with motherhood, has been an enduring theme of feminism (Offen, 1992; Rendall, 1987). Karen Offen, an historian of feminism, has argued that this 'relational' feminism co-existed, and intertwined, with 'individualist' or 'equal rights' feminism; often within the arguments and beliefs of individual feminists. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 'Vindication of the Rights of Women' called upon both equal rights and 'relational' arguments of maternal responsibility. Offen suggests that the discord and tension between the two tendencies, which characterises contemporary debate, began to evolve from the 1890s onwards as 'individualist' feminism gained ascendancy, particularly in Britain and the United States (1992:75-81).

Within contemporary radical feminism, women's thinking is characterised, as in traditional political thought, as being the opposite of male thinking (female thinking is concrete, subjective and emotional as opposed to male traits of abstract, rational and objective thought). However, radical feminism (and ecofeminism) asserts that women's thinking is superior and more human than dominant male thinking; which is seen as responsible for ecological crisis and militarism (Daly, 1978; Griffin, 1978). The different modes of thought are seen as rooted in biology, different bodily experiences. For the French anti-rationalist feminists, (for instance, Cixous and Irigaray), women's mode of thinking, and innate superiority, is seen as arising from their complex sexuality.⁶ Anglo-Americans notably Adrienne Rich (1976) and Mary O'Brien (1981) focus more upon mothering as a the source of difference. Their stance more closely equates with 'relational feminism's' historical explanation for different morality (Offen, 1992). A continuum of difference feminism exists, which ranges from those who see women's distinctiveness as arising from biology

6 For an overview of New French feminists see Moller Okin (1990); for more detailed discussion and analysis see Marks and de Courtivron (1981).

and their ability to give birth (O'Brien, 1981), to those who see the social practice of child-rearing as crucial in the formation of distinctive values (Ruddick, 1980; 1989).

There is a running controversy over the 'celebration' of women's mothering and its characterisation by these theorists as an important source of women's power. Critics are suspicious of the biological determinism they see as inherent in this approach. British socialist feminists such as Lynne Segal have been deeply critical of what she has termed the 'maternal revivalists' (1987:145).⁷ There is also considerable feminist resistance to notions of women's different morality. Reasoning which relies upon women's traditional roles as mothers and carers can easily become essentialist and conservative, a justification to limit and constrain women. Moller-Okin notes that the strand of feminism which celebrates difference plays into the hands of reactionary and conservatives forces. She cites Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter in 1988 in which he refers to women's special capacity to care for others in order to justify confining women to the roles of motherhood or celibacy (Moller Okin, 1989:15).⁸ Mary Dietz, in particular, has argued that people must rise above their everyday identities to be citizens. Dietz sees caring work as particularist and insular, and has dismissed the idea that civic virtue can arise from motherhood.

When we look to mothering for a vision of feminist citizenship [...] we look in the wrong place (Dietz, 1985:13)

Joan Tronto, a leading theorist of care, acknowledges that essentialist strains of women's different thinking can lead to 'dangerous politics'. She also stresses that, in its traditional form, women's morality was confined to the 'right sort' of women; it excluded many types of women which it classed as 'other' or 'immoral', for example: working class women; black women; lesbians and 'unfit mothers'. However Tronto notes its enduring appeal to a wide variety of women - not least because it valorises women's work in contrast to the low status it is accorded by society (Tronto, 1993:1-2). Sara Ruddick, for example, highlights the contempt with which American society treats caring work by citing a 1975 United States Government survey where the complexity of different jobs was rated. Amongst the lowest rated jobs were child care worker, nursery school teachers and foster

⁷ See also Liz Heron (1980) discussed in Rowbotham (1989).

⁸ For more general arguments on the reinforcement of sexual stereotypes see Moller Okin (1990)

mothers who scored equal with a parking lot attendant and less skilled than the 'shoveler of chicken offal into a container'; a midwife was considered less skilful than a hotel clerk (Ruddick, 1989: 32-33). Sheila Rowbotham sums up the ambivalence of many British feminists to approaches which, on the positive side, valorise female values but also contain the potential to be used by conservative forces to reinforce sexual stereotypes (Rowbotham, 1989).

However much of the criticism of 'women's thinking' rests on a false assumption that talk of women's values necessarily leads to essentialism. The idea that specific modes of thinking and 'truths' arise from specific practices is part of the practicalist tradition - including philosophers Wittgenstein and Habermas, as well as maternal and care theorists like Sara Ruddick and Joan Tronto. When approached from this perspective, it does not seem remarkable to claim that women who are involved for a large part of their time in a specific practice - in this instance, the practice of caring work, will develop a perspective/ set of skills/ insights /thinking related to that practice. Thus to argue that women may well have values and a standpoint related to their social role as primary carers is not a remarkable nor, necessarily, a reactionary claim. What must be stressed in Ruddick and Tronto's work on difference is the crucial insistence that caring or 'maternal thinking' is *not* just a disposition.

(C)aring is not simply a cerebral concern, or a character trait, but the concern of living, active humans engaged in the processes of everyday living. Care is both a practice and a disposition. (Tronto, 1993:104).

Tronto argues that to see caring as primarily a disposition renders it individualist and sentimentalised and perpetuates the 'women are designed for caring' arguments. By conceptualising caring as practice, with its emphasis on practical knowledge, in the work of Tronto and Ruddick the *rational activity* of caring is stressed. Ruddick suggests the practice of care should be seen as an alternative ideal - a combination of love and knowledge which challenges the traditional separation of emotion and rationality in what she calls 'Love's Reason' (Ruddick, 1989:9).

Despite common characterisations of these arguments to the contrary, neither Ruddick nor Tronto make any claim that caring and nurturance are innate qualities of women. In contrast to 'feminine ideology' neither writer claims caring is the *only*

activity women should engage in, nor that they should be solely defined by it. Ruddick states that she has, 'no patience with the idea that a person's identity is wholly formed by her principal work or, still more confining, by the gender identity a particular society expects' (Ruddick, 1989: 134).

Maternal practice and maternal thinking

Ruddick defines practices as :

Collective human activities distinguished by the aims that identity them and by the consequent demands made on practitioners committed to those aims. The aims or goals that define a practice are so central or 'constitutive' that in the absence of the goal you would not have the practice [...] to engage in a practice means to be committed to meeting its demands. (1989: 13-14)

Ruddick uses the example of horse racing to illustrate her definition. Horse racing is a practice, she explains, which is defined by the goal of winning the race, by the shared meaning of a jockey riding a horse over a finishing line. In different cultures meanings may be refined, nevertheless a riderless horse crossing the finishing line is not a winner; and a rider out for a trot is not engaged in the practice of horse racing (pp.13- 17). Using this schema, maternal practice arises out of a commitment to raise a child. This gives rise to thinking in terms of strategies for dealing with conflicts , which in turn gives way to reflection and modification of practice (Ruddick :18-27). Not all mothers are maternal thinkers. Ruddick insists that maternal thinking cannot be idealised, but is instead characterised by struggle and temptation. However, maternal thinking gives rise to important insights, not least the central importance of caring work; it also produces complex and flexible strategies for dealing with need and conflict, which have potential application in social and political contexts. Ruddick's specific purpose is the use of 'transformed' maternal thinking to mobilise women in peace politics.

Ruddick is careful to avoid universalism in her maternal thinking. She stresses the mediating factors of race, class, culture and material circumstances will result in varied practices of mothering within and across cultures; however she does argue that the demands and goals of the practice are shared. For example, in maternal practice the demands for the preservation of a child's life; its' growth and its'

eventual social acceptability result in the practice of preservative love, nurturance and training (1989:17).

There are three basic claims which arise from the framing of caring work as practice: firstly, that care should be centrally placed in social, ethical and political discourse; secondly, that practical strategies and intellectual skills which arise from the practise of caring can be 'transformed' and transferred to a wider context of politics; and thirdly, that a potentially superior standpoint arises out of the marginalised practice of care.

The Standpoint of women

Both Ruddick and Tronto use the concept of *standpoint* in their work. The idea of the *visionary standpoint* of women was popularised in feminism by Nancy Hartsock (1983, 1987).⁹ Women's work is seen as rooted in the material world and connected with others. It gives rise to practical knowledge, and because it involves processes of connection, separation, development, change and the limits of control it produces sensitive strategies to deal with change and conflict (Ruddick, 1989: 127-140).

Women are involved with work which is central to everyone's lives, but they and that essential work is marginalised. This gives them a point of leverage from which to understand and change society. By virtue of women's marginal experience, especially as devalued carers, they have a greater grasp on reality - this enables them to see and express truths that are obscured from those (mostly men) in a culturally or politically dominant position. For, not only do they have to deal with their own version of reality but must also negotiate the realities of hegemonic groups, and the way in which these opposing sets of reality relate and contradict each other. In contrast dominant groups perceive their own reality as 'truth' and are seldom required to acknowledge or consider alternative viewpoints. Thus there is an argued value, or an epistemological advantage, to a marginal position because one has access to different ways of knowing. Hartsock argues this advantage to the degree that feminist standpoint represents Truth (1987). Ruddick and Tronto however use the framework of feminist standpoint to develop their own versions based upon maternal thinking and care perspectives. They argue that their maternal,

⁹ See discussion in Chapter 1.

and care standpoints are privileged, but stop short of claims of definitive truths (see also Eisenstein, 1991).

Ruddick sees the value of women's work or maternal practice in its potential to be generalised by society as a whole - and for an ethos of care to imbue society. Ruddick is, however, anxious that these claims are not interpreted to be seen as an aim to create a future that is female - but rather a 'fully human community' where institutionalised gender differences of power and property are eliminated. Indeed, she is careful to include men as potential mothers and maternal thinkers (p.134).

Although Ruddick situates women in social movements rather than in elected politics, maternal thinking brings useful insights to the debate on representation. It is useful because it talks about care, a predominant theme in many women politicians accounts of their lives but of which politics takes scant account. It valorises care and its importance in everyday life, and points to the potential use of 'transformed maternal practice' in public life.

Jenny Chapman takes up this theme in her cross-national political study where she argues that the female standpoint needs to be incorporated into politics together with the valorisation of female role functions and values. Chapman notes that feminist action which has taken a stand on female identity has at specific points paid dividends for women. For example, women in Norway and Iceland made significant electoral gains when they adopted separatist stances (Chapman, 1993).

Despite Ruddick's careful definitions, her use of the maternal idiom means her work is often misrepresented as essentialist or as uncritically celebratory of mothering. Ruddick discusses at length what she characterises as the 'temptations' of maternal practice including parochialism, cheery denial, self-righteousness . She also notes the militarism of some mothers. She is aware that women, organising as mothers and invoking 'mother's values' can present radical challenges to the state as did the Madres in Argentina in the 1970s, but can also be used to underpin and reinforce reactionary regimes, for example in Nazi Germany and in Pinochet's Chile (pp.223-234).¹⁰ Ruddick does not idealise or privilege mothering in itself. The importance

¹⁰ On a less extreme level, Chapman notes the emergence of the 'Mothers Manifesto' faction in the West German Green movement as constituting a conservative, rather than a progressive tendency with its pro-family, anti-abortion programme (1993:239-140).

of maternal practice for Ruddick is in its potentiality, the way it can rationally develop, through struggle, into a set of practices and a standpoint with use in the wider world, particularly in pursuit of the politics of peace.

Ruddick's argument is interesting and subtle, and offers many insights. However many people, both critics and supporters, do not get beyond the 'mother' in maternal thinking (for example, Evans, 1995). Because of this it is unlikely that maternal thinking could pass into everyday political discourse without an undertow of conservatism. Therefore Ruddick's insistence on a specific 'maternal' thinking, rather than a standpoint arising from the general practice of care, is in some respects too partial and contentious for a useful application, although her arguments resonate with the discussions of many women councillors in the current study (see Chapter 6).

Caring as Politics

Joan Tronto's work shares with Ruddick the importance of caring perspectives which reveal the flaws in dominant ways of knowing. She exposes the ways in which dominant discourses obscure the central importance of care; and the structuring of social economic and political life which fails to incorporate the caring needs and responsibilities of all. However, Tronto differs from Ruddick in two respects: firstly, she applies a generic and inclusive definition of caring practice which includes women in their unpaid and paid labours, and also marginal groups of men (for example black and ethnic minority men) who also are required by society to do low paid caring work; and secondly, she develops the ethic of care into a political idea. She argues that men must be 'persuaded' to give up some their power; and that politics must change in order not only that women may fully participate, but also that politics may more fully reflect the needs and interests of the whole community.

Tronto advances the most developed concept of the ethic of care. She empties 'women's morality' of any biological essentialism and charts the links between 'women's morality' and 'slave's and black people's morality'. She also notes the similarity between women's morality and the notion of 'sentiment' in the work of thinkers of Scottish Enlightenment such as Hutcheson, Hume and Smith.¹¹ She sees

¹¹ For a similar discussion see Sevenhuijsen (1991).

the 'privatisation' of virtue as being historically specific to the 18th Century, in particular with the expansion of the global economy and the growth of capitalism; and argues that the conditions of the late 20th Century demand that the boundaries between morality and politics be re drawn again (Tronto, 1993:Chapter 2).

Tronto's core argument is that one must stop seeing the clutch of values and concerns about nurturance, compassion and caring as 'women's morality', and start talking about an *ethic of care*. She argues that care should not be seen as 'merely' morals, but must be placed centrally in politics :

What I propose to do [...] is to offer a vision for the good society that draws upon feminist sensibilities and upon traditional "women's morality" without falling into the strategic traps that have so far doomed this approach. (Tronto, 1993:3).

In contrast to Ruddick, Tronto's definition of care, formulated with Berenice Fisher, is comprehensive:

On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as *a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible*. That world includes our bodies, our selves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web. (Fisher and Tronto, 1991: 40. Their italics).

An ethic of care

Tronto takes four basic stages of care practice which she characterises as: 'caring about'; 'taking care of'; 'care giving' and 'care receiving' and formulates a four element moral ethic of care (1993: 125-155). The four parts are as follows:

1. **Attentiveness** - This relates to 'caring about'. By this standard ignoring the needs of others would be a form of a moral failing, and recognising the needs of those around us would be a moral achievement.

2. **Responsibility** - This relates to 'taking care of' and is seen as a central moral category. Tronto argues that responsibility which is contextual is more useful than

'obligation', which arises from formal response to promises. She uses the riots in South Central Los Angeles as an example of how questions of responsibility can become political debates. She asks what responsibility has society or government to help in rebuilding area devastated by riots? She argues that this is a different question to, what obligation? Governments looking at obligation would look at contracts, formal agreements, previously stated duties; and might conclude they had no obligation to help. However, responsibility goes beyond formal and legal ties and would relate to issues like: to what extent did governments and local politics play a part in creating the conditions for riot, for instance, through lack of job opportunities etc.? As such, a responsibility to care would be more flexible than the notion of obligation - and Tronto argues, a better basis for understanding (pp.131-133).

3. Competence - This relates to 'care-giving'. Competence of care-giving is framed as a moral notion. Tronto argues for its inclusion in order to deal with the 'bad faith' problem - i.e. those who would 'take care of' a problem without being willing to ensure the adequacy of the solution. She uses the example of a teacher in an inadequately funded school being forced to teach maths even though he is not trained or equipped to do so. Is he to be morally condemned? Tronto argues that the competence requirement does not condemn the teacher but those at the 'taking care of' stage, the authorities, because the competence relates to those responsible for the ensuring adequacy of outcome. She notes that at present: 'Especially in large bureaucracies, this type of 'taking care of', with no concern about outcome or end result, seems pervasive' (Tronto, 1993: 134).¹²

4. Responsiveness - This relates to 'care-receiving'. Under this heading the care-receiver is required to be responsive to the care received. Tronto challenges the notion of autonomy and self-support - if everyone needs care then everyone is vulnerable and inter-dependent. The active involvement of care-receivers in interpreting need also minimises the potential for abuse that arises from vulnerability. Tronto sees responsiveness as engaging from the standpoint of the other - not in assuming the other to be the same as oneself - but accepting the other's position as they express it. She emphasises that people are not

¹² A good case study to apply Tronto's typology to would be the British Government's 'Care in the Community' policy. Where those 'taking care of' policy have not, it is widely argued, allocated sufficient resources. According to Tronto's scheme, they have acted in 'bad faith' because they have not ensured adequacy of outcome.

interchangeable, therefore responsiveness values difference (p136). To be responsive also requires one to be attentive, thus all the elements of the ethic of care are intertwined.

In addition, Tronto discusses *integrity of practice*, which in the case of care requires that all four stages of the practice of care must fit together. For *integrity of care ethic*, the corresponding four moral elements of the care must be integrated. This is not simple, as care involves conflicting needs and scarce resources. Tronto argues that care as a practice needs more than good intentions, and requires knowledge, practical strategies and contextual judgement. She argues that these assessments of need are social and political, as well as personal (p.137).

Tronto contends that care, as carers know in reality, is of central importance. However, it has been marginalised in moral and political thought - and in society. Moreover, it has been marginalised because of the contradiction, in both theoretical and practical terms, between the dominant discourses of autonomy and universal equality, and the realities of human vulnerability and interdependence. Her work challenges ideas about human nature and politics: in particular it challenges the standard descriptions of the autonomous moral agent or political actor posited by theory, and its everyday equivalent the 'self made man' as the norm.

She argues that dominant discourses fear dependence therefore they devalue care and obscure care-giving, especially the care needs of the powerful. Private care is trivialised and public care work underpaid. Thus, using Tronto's reasoning, one can argue that administrative workers like secretaries, who Moller Okin sees as being underpaid through processes of 'vulnerability by anticipation of marriage', are further undervalued in order to obscure and trivialise their support of 'self-made' men. The powerful are in reality, *care demanders* who, because of their resources, can secure more care than others. In what Tronto terms as a 'pre-emptive strike', the powerful adopt strategies which defuse any sense of dependency when their needs are met:

To treat care as shabby and unimportant helps maintain the positions of the powerful vis-a-vis those who do care for them. The mechanisms of this dismissal are subtle; and they are of course filtered through existing structures of sexism and racism. (1993: 124).

These 'fragmented conceptions of care' perpetuate inequalities of gender, race and class through the construction of 'otherness' (p.101). All people are interdependent and at various stages, to various degrees and in various configurations, give and receive care. However the caring required by the powerful has been rendered invisible - and the 'needy' are problematised and stigmatised. Any form of dependency is seen as weakness - for example, welfare mothers are seen as lazy because they are dependent - and the only explanation is their 'choice' of lifestyle (p.123).

A further consequence of the unbalanced nature of caring burdens is that those who are powerful have the opportunity 'simply to ignore certain forms of hardships that they do not face' (p.121). Therefore for example men, whose caring needs are met and whose caring responsibilities are carried out by others, do not 'see' their privilege; nor its relation to others disadvantage. Neither do they accept any responsibility for the problem. Tronto terms this *privileged irresponsibility* (pp.121, 146-147).

Tronto challenges the centrality of individualist interests in human and political life, which Rawls terms 'life-projects'; and the measuring of human worth only as productive beings embedded in 'the work ethic'. Instead she posits an alternative view of people as interdependent beings - 'the care ethic' (p.102); and an alternative notion of needs not as individual interests but as interpersonal, cultural and contested - and a matter of social concern (p.164). Tronto proposes to turn 'care' into a political ideal and the practice of care into a political idea because it describes what is necessary for citizens to live together well in a pluralist society.

Tronto challenges what she calls, 'the convenient fiction of human equality' (p.145), which underpins much political theory. Universalism which posits people as autonomous and equal citizens fails to recognise inequalities. This in turn give rise to unequal relationships of power and authority. She argues that in a standpoint of care the starting point would be human interdependence (pp.163-164). Inequality would be recognised as part of human experience, and also as something that can be overcome. The new question, says Tronto, would be how to let equality arise out of inequality:

What does this transformed account of human nature mean about the way that democratic citizens live their lives ? Rather than assuming the fiction that all citizens are equal, a care perspective would have us recognise the achievement of equality as a political goal. At present, we presume that people are equal though we know they are not. If we attempted to achieve some type of equality as a political goal, it would make facts about inequality more difficult to dismiss. Questions such as : at what point do inequalities of resources prevent citizens from equal power? would become important political questions; they would not remain simply theoretical questions. (Tronto, 1993: 164-165).

Tronto accepts there are theoretical difficulties with a move away from universalism, particularly problems of particularity (pp.141-145). She attempts to resolve this by suggesting that a theory of care is inadequate unless it is embedded in a theory of justice. In an argument which begins from a very different starting point to Moller Okin, Tronto likewise concludes that the notion of interdependence must be incorporated within adequate theories of justice.

Because care forces us to think concretely about people's real needs, and about evaluating how these needs will be met, it introduces questions about what we value into everyday life. Should society be organized in a way that helps to maintain some forms of privilege before the more basic needs of others are met? Those kinds of questions, posed in stark form, help us get closer to resolving fundamental questions of justice more than continued abstract discussions about the meaning of justice. (1993:124).

The standpoint of care and discourses of representation

Tronto argues that the use of vocabulary of care reveals the power distribution in society, and suggests it can serve as a basis for political change and a strategy for mobilising and organising. The introduction of the idea of care into political debates would empower women and minority groups, because inequality would be rendered visible and subject to redress and would thus, suggests Tronto, act as a catalyst for women's political mobilisation:

Care is a way of framing political issues that makes their impact, and concern with human lives, direct and immediate. Within the care framework, political

issues can make sense and connect to each other. Under these conditions, political involvement increases dramatically. (Tronto, 1993:177).

In an emerging argument in Tronto the following points can be drawn out to argue that the introduction of a *political discourse of care* could potentially empower women in politics in several ways:

Firstly, the notion of 'care as practice' would legitimise many women's experiences, and would link caring to citizenship, and for the purposes of our argument also to political office. The potential utility for public life of lessons learned in the family find some parallel in Moller Okin, who suggests that the family is a crucial site where children (and adults) learn about justice and fairness (1989: 156-159). Sarah Ruddick discusses the training of children as one of the aspects of maternal practice (1989:177).

Secondly, the skills of *attentiveness*, *responsibility*, *competence* and *responsiveness* can be proffered as transferable skills vital in a politics where needs are discussed and where there is, 'an honest intersection between needs and interests' (Tronto, 1993:167).

Thirdly, the care debate exposes inequalities and could potentially empower marginal groups to pool the 'powers of the weak' and 'persuade' the powerful to give up some of their power.

However Tronto does not address the issue of how care as a political concept becomes 'legitimised' - how does it become an acceptable discourse against the dominant discourses of individualism and the productive/ capitalist vision? It should be noted, for instance in UK governmental discourse, that much social legislation is represented as secondary to free market imperatives. So, for instance, European Union Social Chapter measures are depicted as un-affordable, damaging to jobs, and an unacceptable interference with employer autonomy. In another example, progressive recommendations to support working mothers put forward by the all-party Commons Employment Select Committee in 1994 were rubbished by junior Employment Minister, Ann Widdecombe as, 'an expensive menu without prices'.¹³

¹³ 'MPs seek more child care rights', *The Guardian* (16.2.1994)

Tronto's argument does not provide any means or mechanisms whereby women can gain access to political elites. She discusses the ineffectiveness of the 'women's morality' strategy as means of increasing the number of women in politics because it has been seen as 'special pleading'. Tronto fails to make mention of the fact that although women's pressure for representation has largely been on grounds of justice and proportionality - rather than women's morality - i.e. on rationalist terms - that too has failed. She does not seem to consider the fact that the men's resistance to women gaining political power is not entirely based on women's faulty strategy.¹⁴

Tronto is also less than convincing on how the 'powers of the weak' can be used to persuade the powerful to give up some of their power. Does she, for instance, mean they must withdraw their caring labour? (Tronto, 1993:177). Elizabeth Janeway (1980), who coined the phrase the 'powers of the weak', lists amongst those powers that of disruption. However she notes that disruption will only work in some circumstances and for a limited amount of time - and Tronto elsewhere discusses the backlash that occurs when carers (like nurses) withdraw their caring labour.

It is disappointing that Tronto does not develop her argument into practical strategy. Tronto, Ruddick and Moller Okin all forward arguments to reinvigorate marginal discourses, but can not find the answer to two central and related questions: How do we 'persuade' men to give up (some) of their political power? and how do we ensure that men do their fair share of caring and domestic labour?

There is a pressing need for ideological alternatives to dominant discourses in order to make clear the needs of equality. At present the needs of equality are obscured by common sense notions of fairness and unfairness; so that moves to promote effective equal opportunities can lead to resentment by those who, currently, have a marginal advantage. There is a need for affirmative action, but there is also a need for it to be seen as 'fair' to avoid what Phillips has called the 'deafness of resentment' which leads to paralysis and backlash (Phillips, 1993).

¹⁴ Valerie Bryson makes a similar point in connection with Janet Radcliffe Richards reasoning. She points out that arguments based upon the 'sweet voice of reason' ignore the powerful structures which oppress women (Bryson, 1992:179-180).

Thus the widening of the debates on justice, equality and the ethic of care to include a wider audience is both pertinent and expedient. Political elites are premised upon an assumption which men are routinely able to make that caring is done by others. Caring issues and concerns are seen as trivial and apolitical. Women who are excluded from politics are seen to be 'failing to come forward'; women politicians who point out the structural disadvantages of female responsibilities are seen to be 'bleating about child care'

To re conceptualise the unequal distribution of power in politics and labour in the home as a 'justice crisis' would reify gendered injustice. An ethic of care would valorise women's work and women's values. It could also suggest a way of placing care as a central political idea. If the vocabulary of care was introduced and rehearsed, it would further expose the uneven distribution of power in society; it would expose male politicians and party officials - as well as men in general - as *care demanders* exercising *privileged irresponsibility* ; and, as such, could act as a catalyst to women's political mobilisation. The use of this discourse would switch the focus from women's need for 'special treatment' ; and would problematise and politicise male behaviour and male structures, rather than problematising women and their burdens of care.

The ideas raised in this chapter are provocative and have raised criticisms (for overviews see Rhode, 1992; Evans, 1995). Many caution against the reactionary potential of care arguments, although I would suggest Tronto answers most of the objections. Barbara Houston however raises a pertinent point which is not resolved satisfactorily by any of the writers.

When I reflect upon the history of women, I realize how much our caring has nurtured and empowered others. I see how good it has been, for others. However, I also see how terribly costly it has been for women. And so the first question that arises for me is [...] Can an ethic of care avoid self-sacrifice? (Houston, 1985).

Thus the contributions are, in several respects, problematic. However they raise important and interesting insights which may have strategic potential to reinvigorate political discourse. In the following chapter the parallels, and contrasts,

between the work of these theorists and the *common sense* theorising of women local politicians are examined.

6 Common Sense: New Discourses of Equality and Difference?

Introduction

The unequal domestic and caring burden of women is identified in the literature and in this study as a fundamental barrier to women. This has been remarked upon so often that it is now passed over as something of a truism. Family responsibilities, and the attribution of final responsibility to women, are both practical and ideological constraints which impede, restrict and shape women's entry and presence in the worlds of work and public life. The unequal caring burden is also inextricably linked to the resistance of male-defined political structures and individual men as political players, social actors and family members to change.

This chapter further explores and discusses the dominant discourses around women's access and presence in elected politics; and also examines alternative or subversive discourses within women politicians' common sense. Some of the councillors interviewed were feminist, many were not. However a strong common thread emerged in their narratives across party about the paradox of domestic and caring labour: that women's experience and values arising from their role as carers is both a barrier and a resource - a reflection of the high value that women placed upon care.¹

This chapter aims to unpack the paradox in order to explore the ways in which women's experience dissonates with dominant constructions of citizens and political actors as autonomous and unencumbered. It examines the ways in which men resist change (and hold on to power) by invoking hegemonic notions of fairness at the level of access; and the way formal institutional rules, as well as informal cultures, undermine women by demanding that they assimilate - or stay at home.

The parallels and contradictions between women's narratives and the theoretical concepts and models raised in Chapter 5 are examined. These include the issues of

¹ Research in the US shows that care is also highly rated in black and ethnic minority groups (Tronto, 1993). I am unaware of any similar work on contextual morality in the UK.

justice and gender, particularly Susan Moller Okin's concept that gender inequalities in the family are at the root of inequalities in society, work and politics; and that this constitutes as *gender crisis of justice*. The idea that women, by virtue of their experience and their caring work, have a specific - indeed advantaged - *standpoint* was discussed in Chapter 5 and was also a strong theme amongst women councillors in this study when discussing their understanding of representation (Chapter 2). Sara Ruddick's thesis that mothering gives rise to both a mode of thinking and specific skills and strategies that are a resource for politics will be explored for parallels within the present study; similarly the more generalist model refined by Joan Tronto who argues for an ethic of care to be placed centrally in politics and a vocabulary of care rehearsed to expose the unequal distribution of caring work and the unequal distribution of power. The narratives of the women councillors are examined to see whether experience arising out of practice - *the practice of caring* - has resulted in incipient or emerging discussions about justice, care and equality.

Common sense

Anne Showstack Sassoon uses Gramsci's notion of *common sense* as a site of struggle between dominant and alternative discourses. Common sense has been understood by some to be a tool of the powerful because it contains elements of hegemonic discourse which reinforce the oppression of the disadvantaged - making their position seem natural. However Gramsci argued, more subtly, that people's workaday realities could give rise to alternative modes of thinking. Common sense therefore is not a mere mirror reflecting hegemonic discourses but contested terrain where complex and contradictory ideas are shaped from an interplay of material conditions, social relations and ideology. He highlighted the importance of critical examination of popular ideas and common sense views of the world (Showstack Sassoon (1987).

Showstack Sassoon contends that women's common sense contains embryonic analyses, explanatory frameworks and blueprints for political change - as well as notions of dominant ideology which serve to reinforce their subordination. She argues that women's everyday lives and material practices simultaneously contradict elements both in their common sense and in dominant ideas. There are enormous difficulties in achieving a knowledge of reality but, Showstack Sassoon

suggests, after Gramsci, the forging of an 'organic relationship' between 'intellectuals' and 'the people'. In an emerging argument she suggests that through the interaction of feminist intellectuals and 'ordinary women', new political alternatives can be developed which draw upon a critical analysis of women's points of view. The contradictions in women's lives 'provide the space or the possibility for a political intervention to construct an alternative hegemony, an alternative view of the world.' (1987: 16-21; 40-42).

In many ways common sense parallels discussions around standpoint. Both frameworks stress the need to struggle for a contested vision; and both contend that understanding grows from the critical examination of contradictions which arise out of practical activities and social conditions (Showstack Sassoon, 1987:41; Hartsock, 1987:174). However common sense implies a less exclusive vision. It stresses that new understandings emerge from reciprocity; and as such the common sense framework gives value to 'what women know'.

Women's concrete experience of fragmented lives, managing contradictory aspects of their work and identity as women, mothers, wives, workers and politicians can give rise to insights. Thus the common sense narratives of female politicians are potential sites for the production of new discourses, albeit tentative, contradictory and contested, as well as the repository of elements which are reactionary and fatalistic. Common sense discourses reveal the power of the disembodied notions of equality which problematise the concrete realities of women's untidy and encumbered lives in contrast to men's *privileged irresponsibility*. For example, men's reaction to women and their 'trailing domesticity' which underlines the distance between male politicians and the concrete realities of caring labour.

Justice, the family and domestic labour

Household labour and issues of caring were seen by female councillors as key factors in both explaining women's relative absence from political institutions, and in justifying the need for their inclusion. However, the long agenda discourse of transformatory change, and the household labour / caring discourse are secondary discourses and discussion of them brings attendant problems of legitimacy. In a number of the interviews there was also a sense of fatalism.

It is significant, however, that a number of women have critically reflected upon practice and experience of themselves and other women and have thought seriously about the interconnection of issues of care, the sexual division of family labour, the gendered patterns of work, and unequal access and influence in political decision-making assemblies. These issues are recognised as complex and intractable, but the patterns in the private and familial spheres are seen as the root cause of patterns of inequalities in the public worlds of work and politics. These perceptions of unequal odds stacked against women are overlaid with a sense of paradox - for women also champion the values of care.

On a more general level the majority of interviewees at some level recognise that their unequal burden is a major barrier to women gaining access to power once they are present in political structures; and a significant disadvantage to women trying to exercise power. However they also recognise it as a source of distinctive experience. Modes of thinking and skills are seen as a source of insight and strength. However the expression of these understandings is in a muted voice. The paradox of women's work/women's values is not a part of dominant political discourse - but is rather expressed as a truism. It is sometimes expressed in traditional, potentially reactionary terms, with little impetus for change; sometimes in radical 'transformed' ways. More often, however, common sense discourses contain elements of both.

A strong strand which can be drawn from an analysis of the interviews is that of the need for men *in general* to take more responsibility for household labour and child care. Several women make an explicit link between equality and the sexual division of family labour:

Women should have the opportunity equally with men and that cannot happen if they're looked upon as the people who look after the children all the time. (Liberal Democrat).

Labour politician Neelam Bakshi, Scotland's first black woman councillor, observes the disjuncture between some of her male colleagues outward commitment to equality and social justice and the concrete realities of their own lives:

I get amused sometimes at meetings watching the number of men who talk about equality on the agenda, knowing full well that they're there because it is a seven o'clock meeting and the wife is at home looking after the kids and making

sure that they get to bed. And I fundamentally believe that some of it has to start in the house. (Labour).

There is recognition that inequalities within the family result in unequal opportunities for women, however, at this level, it is seldom directly expressed as an injustice in the way that Moller Okin suggests that the sexual division of labour within the family is a *justice crisis of gender*. Instead it is more often characterised as an unfortunate fact of life which inhibits many able women from entering elected politics; an acceptance of women's *inevitably domestic personae* (Cockburn, 1991). The sense that domestic arrangements are still seen as a voluntarist agreement, an individual problem permeates many of the interviews and solutions tend to be characterised in terms of the provision of child care etc. It is not generally dignified as a crisis of justice.

Scottish National councillor Helen Angus, a recent graduate and adult returner, works as a tutor to the long-term unemployed and is convenor of Tayside Region's Equal Opportunities committee. She challenges the inevitability of women's domesticity. She is one of a small number of interviewees who spoke about sharing child care and domestic labour with her partner:

We've always worked it between us, it's not one of those households where Mummy does this

Helen Angus opposes any kind of special measures for women. Citing her own experience of being able to negotiate alternative ways of working, she criticises women who, she perceives, surrender to the guilt and expectations of their traditional role.

Women are their own worst enemy sometimes. They take burdens upon themselves. They think they're the only people that are responsible for child care; they're the only people responsible for the house etc. It's guilt.

She does support the provision of more nurseries but sees the key to women's increased participation in politics as challenging and changing social roles.

It would have to be things like, can we re-educate men to take on as much of the child care as women? I mean, it is possible, we've done it. It's a question of attitudes. (Scottish National).

Without the characterisation of justice - or other explanations of the structural nature of inequalities - discourses around the sexual division of labour can be quite woman-blaming, especially if individual women have indeed succeeded in negotiating equal terms.

Italian researcher, Chiara Saraceno, amongst others, emphasises the difficulties of what she calls *attribution of final responsibility* within families - even within non-traditional relationships. The problem which is commonly expressed in the question: where does the buck stop? Men have the psychological and material resources to choose to be present or not - ie they can 'pass the buck'. Whereas women seldom even perceive their presence or non presence in the family as a matter of choice, as a result of a complex of psychological and social factors. Women see their presence as a necessity, they are acutely aware of the needs within families especially the care needs of children. Saraceno asks whether women can really *choose* to be absent - or to not relate; or whether such choice is contingent upon the guaranteed presence of another? Therefore men have a choice because women's presence is assumed.

Can one really choose absences, or non-relating, or is that only possible because someone else guarantees *a priori* before any choice is made [...] precisely this presence and recognition? (1987:199)

Thus choice and necessity are inextricably linked in women's experiences. The dilemma for women is that , in the face of men's refusal to do their fair share of caring work, their options are limited. Women recognise the concrete needs of those around them and the necessity of that work because those needs cannot be left unmet, 'the buck stops here'. Their choice becomes that of efficiently managing the double or triple burden - or not participating. As such the political participation of women with caring responsibilities remains in the gift of her partner or lies in her individual resources to manage conflicting demands.

If a man is in a political party then it's the man who goes to the party meetings and the woman who has to stay at home and watch the kids, until the children are up or there are crèche facilities, because the meetings are nearly always at night. If put to the test I think you'd find most men would go to the meetings. They wouldn't say, 'Well you go this time.'
That's basically the problem -when nominations are put forward it's usually men. Now the Labour party has now decided on a 50/50 nominations -but it's

very difficult for a woman to get in, because she has got to start saying, 'What is going to happen to the children?' (Labour).

Along the way we do collect probably more responsibilities as far as family is concerned - so whereas a man might be able to dump his job for a period of four years to take up something as uncertain as [Westminster] politics you can't just dump your children for four years, or dump your old mother-in-law. I think there is definitely more difficulty for women and for women the further away from London then the greater the problem. (Conservative).

Single parents did not speak directly about whether they felt disadvantaged because they did not have a partner and potential support - or advantaged because they did not have a man's care needs to attend to in addition to those of their children. What can be deduced from interviews however is that single parents did not appear to think they were disadvantaged in anything other than a financial way (for example, having to bring up a family on benefit, or on part-time or sporadic earnings). Similarly, although there were no openly lesbian councillors in this study, research on couples in the US (cited by Moller Okin, 1989) suggests that lesbian households are far more likely than heterosexual households to share domestic labour equitably. Therefore it can be surmised that women in heterosexual partnerships are likely to face the most acute problems of care-demanding and unequal care burdens.

Cockburn argues that there is a need for men to become more domesticated. 'It is only men, as men, who can take steps to square the circle, make possible the impossible' (p.97) by taking on responsibilities and demanding that those responsibilities are recognised and accommodated in, in her instance, the world of work. Her argument applies equally to political life.

In a survey of Greater London councillors, Jim Barry notes that male respondents seemed able to hold mutually excluding positions. He found that family responsibilities were forwarded by men as the main reason for the under-representation of women in politics. They also agreed with the assertion that it is now easier for women to enter politics than it was ten years ago; yet they cheerfully admitted that they do little housework and that politicians need a 'wife' to get on (Barry, 1991:182). Their complacency is apparent.

The concepts of *justice* and *justice crisis of gender* could be usefully developed and used to legitimise discourses around the inequalities that arise from the sexual division of labour; to expose the structural inequalities of heterosexual family life

and relationships between women and men; and to ginger agendas for change. Women are problematised and penalised because of their caring responsibilities, in employment and in politics. A reframing of the notion of justice to take account of the concrete realities of gendered lives would enable greater understanding of the way the status quo discriminates in favour of men.

In the current study, several women discussed the unequal outcome of formal, or gender-blind, equality .

I hate the Conservative views, 'Well ,when we choose a candidate, we choose them on their merit and we wouldn't *dream* of discriminating in favour of a woman.' When, of course, what they're doing just now is *discriminating in favour of a man!* [...] Because the reality is there are hardly *any* women. Is it really true that there are *no* women of talent in the Conservative party ? Because if what they are saying is true - then that's obviously the case - and I don't believe that's the case, and I don't believe that *they* believe it. (Scottish National).

Thus the idea of a justice crisis of gender is important in its contribution towards constructing a discourse which takes women's common sense complaints and reframes them as rational demands for action springing from concerns of justice. It would also expose men's complacency at institutional and personal level as unacceptable and unjust.

Privileged Irresponsibility : Men's care demands

Joan Tronto argues that the vocabulary of care is a critical and strategic tool which reveals the power distribution in society. The introduction of the idea of care into political debates would empower women and minority groups, because inequality would be rendered visible and subject to redress. This would suggest Tronto, act as a catalyst for women's political mobilisation (1993:175-176).

She argues that dominant discourses, devalue care and obscure care-giving, especially the care needs of the powerful. Private care is trivialised and public care work underpaid. Thus her insights can be used to further expose the way that political systems are premised upon the false autonomy of political actors - whereas in reality that autonomy is premised on assumption that women will do the care work for men: every politician needs a wife.

Women in the present study frequently invoke what Tronto has characterised as men's *privileged irresponsibility* - the way that men benefit from having others do their servicing and caring. As outlined in the earlier sections on barriers facing women, there is a clear and common insight into the advantages that this gives men in general and in particular as political players at party and council level.

It is hard. It's just another thing to juggle with time isn't it ? Because you don't become a politician and everything else melts into the background; you still have all the other things to do. I always say this to my male counterparts - they can be in a debate - and in Tayside Region the other day the debate went on for thirteen hours [...] The full council started at 10.30 in the morning and finished at 11.30 at night. Now, for the men - they have a wife at home who's made their tea, who's put it in the oven or whatever - so everything's hunky-dory. They haven't had to worry about picking up children from school; they haven't had to worry about putting a meal on the table that kind of thing, but females do. (Liberal Democrat).

Barron et al. suggest that women politicians are more likely to try and adapt their political work around their children's needs; and are adept at reserving time for them despite heavy workloads. They note the different priorities of female and male councillors; women tended to put their children first, men did not (Barron, 1991:101-102). Whilst both men and women felt conflict in reconciling family and politics they report that:

Men tend to 'resolve' this conflict by withdrawing from family life to a large degree; rather than delaying their entry into politics, or working out coping strategies as women usually do. (p.90)

One Labour councillor in the current study, newly elected in 1994, had been active in politics for many years; and had first approached to stand more than six years ago when her children were young. Her response then was markedly different to that of her husband's when he had been approached .

[Standing for council] was out of the question .Whereas [my husband] never thought anything about it. Oh, he could do it - and he did do it ! *But he'd no other responsibilities.* So that was in my mind then, Gosh I couldn't do that because who would do this? Who would do that ? Now the children are older that's not a problem. (Labour)(My italics).

Like some women in Barron's study, she delayed her entry into elected politics. Her comments also reveal her recognition (and apparent acceptance) of her husband's *privileged irresponsibility*. In addition to the child-care and domestic labour this

interviewee also provided her husband with practical and emotional support in his duties as a councillor, including constituency case-work. This experience is in common with at least one other interviewee who was a 'councillor's wife' before she was a councillor.

The *care demanding* role of men is recognised and understood by some women councillors. Care demanding is Tronto's concept that the powerful make heavy demands on others for care which are obscured by twin processes of trivialising care and promoting the notion of the autonomous individual (see Chapter 5). These 'fragmented conceptions of care' perpetuate inequalities of gender, race and class through the construction of 'otherness'. Several argued that it is not just child care which inhibits women's political activism, but also the care demands and expectations of male partners:

Even if she hasn't got children -the man expects meals at night when he gets home - so there's difficulties put in a woman's way right from the start. (Labour).

Others discussed the ways in which male councillors trivialise care - and the problems women face as carers:

We take it [the problems of women as carers] more seriously than men - whether it's because we've been there and we know what other people, other women, are being faced with. Men are apt to push it to one side: 'Ah, it's a woman's *job* - women are *supposed* to worry; women are *supposed* to feel stress'. (Labour).

Barron's interviews with English councillors revealed that male councillors receive significantly more practical and emotional support from their partners than female councillors, but were less likely to acknowledge or publicly place value upon it (1991: Chapter 5 *im passim*). Similarly the acquiescence of the partners of several women politicians in the Barron study, and in the present study, are contingent upon male *care demands* for 'domestic stability' being met.

A lot of women have very good partners who are very supportive, but there still is a fine line and edge - where it comes to a point where they say, 'No, I've had enough'. Because they do expect more. So all this rubbish that people say - it's not difficult for women - it *is* more difficult for women, but at an emotional level. It's not harder for them academically, it's not that women aren't capable, but some women find it's not worth it at the end of the day - why should they do that added burden? (Liberal Democrat).

'Trailing Domesticity' - Men's reaction to women and their baggage

One of the ways in which men devalue care is shown in their disregard and discomfort with the evidence of 'private' lives and care concerns spilling over into the public world of work and politics. In particular a number of women highlighted the adverse reactions they had encountered from some male councillors if they had to bring their children into the Council - despite the fact that this was generally caused in the first place by the inability of rigid council structures to accommodate the care responsibilities in women's lives.

Labour councillor, Margo Lennie, contrasted the flexibility shown in adapting meeting times to accommodate rural councillors, mostly men, travelling in to Tayside Regional headquarters, with the reaction she and other mothers encountered when they raised the issue of council meetings being held during school holidays.

They don't even consult with us. We say, 'Wait a minute, the kids are on holiday and you've got an meeting here'. So we just have to bring them in - sometimes it used to be like a crèche [...] and it keeps the Tories out of the councillors' lounge! (Labour).

Lesley Hinds, leader of Edinburgh District Council, has three children, including two girls now aged ten and four. She entered the council when her elder daughter was a few months old, and gave birth to her younger daughter whilst a councillor. Child care has been an intermittent problem for her, and there have been a number of occasions when she has brought both her daughters, as babies, into the City Chambers. Her experience is that the council is not a child-friendly place. She recounts one occasion shortly after she joined the council when she took her six month old daughter into a Women's Committee meeting.

The meeting went to 'B' agenda - which is where the public are excluded because it is confidential business - But she couldn't understand what we were talking about! However one of the Tories said she ought to be put out of the committee because she was a member of the public! (Labour).

She feels that acceptance of her younger daughter six years later was also grudging, and was conditional on her 'good behaviour'. Similarly, at a break during one of the full council meetings which I attended in 1994 one councillor, who was nursing her very young baby, remarked that she had to keep well out of sight of certain male

councillors - or they would manufacture a 'shock-horror' story for the local paper. Lesley Hinds observes that there is no attempt made to understand the issues behind the occasionally - and obviously disturbing - appearance of children in the chambers.

You sometimes get councillors, mostly men, who will say, not to your face, but will say, 'God, she's always coming along with her children!' But never actually think, 'But why does she come along with her children? Is it because there's not enough good quality child care?' (Labour).

The experiences recounted by Lesley Hinds and Margo Lennie serve to highlight the disregard with which women with child care responsibilities are treated by the system, and individual men within it. It also underscores the disdain and dislike evoked in some male councillors by the presence of children in the 'public' world - which is seen as illegitimate, disgraceful even. This underlines the distance between some male politicians, and the concrete realities of caring labour. Lesley Hinds experience is strikingly similar to the reaction Labour MP Harriet Harman faced when she arrived at the House of Commons for an important vote just nine days after giving birth to her son Joe, as reported by Coote and Patullo (1990).

She had taken baby Joe to the Whip's Office to be cared for while she voted, but had been spotted on the way in - and in that place a mother and a baby are a rare sighting. As she filed in to vote, the cry went up 'I Spy Strangers' - the curious old phrase used when a non-MP is suspected of going through the division lobby. The MP for Peckham was being accused of smuggling her baby, hidden beneath her cardigan, into the inner sanctum. (p.255).

Harriet Harman takes up the story:

Somebody told the Chief Whip in a hysterical sort of way that I had carried him through the Division Lobby. I thought it showed such an unstable approach to this little baby. He was no threat to anyone, yet the very idea of him deeply attacked people's nerve endings. I had come from a cosy home environment, and before that from hospital with all those new babies. To arrive in the Commons and find it full of anti-social, alien types of men who'd been festering all day before the vote - it really was a culture shock. And then you have to be stripped of your baby in order to exercise your right to vote because that makes you a *real* MP. (Coote and Patullo, 1990: 255-256)

Cockburn has reported the unease men feel about the presence of women in organisational life; and the way they are disturbed at women 'trailing evidence of domesticity' into the public world of work (1991: 94-95). Cockburn also explores the anger and resentment felt by men, both as workers and as managers, at pregnant women and new mothers remaining in their jobs - not only in terms of 'mother's privileges', for instance maternity benefits, but also for, as they perceived it, transgressing boundaries. Evelyn Mahon's research on working mothers in the Irish civil service uncovered cases where women used up their holidays to cover each other's maternity leave because they perceived, in a mixed and highly competitive environment, maternity leave is intensely resented by male colleagues. (1991:170)

Similarly within this current study, some women were far more comfortable talking about child care as a policy issue rather than their own arrangements. This caution, sometimes irritation, may relate to an unease at being confirmed as the domestic sex coupled with what one councillor identified as 'bleating' - the sense that women's domestic concerns are delegitimised within political elites. Kim Nicoll a Scottish National Party councillor with a young family observes that if you complain you are seen as 'bleating' ; and accused of wanting to change the rules halfway through the game.

They have meetings at 3 o'clock - now why do they start a meeting at three? Now if I bleat and say 'It's not fair' - I have actually said, 'You do realise that schools come out at this time and if I am in a meeting how am I to pick up the kids from school?' - they're not in the least bit interested. In fact that's better, because that means I can't go [to the meeting], and if I'm not there I'm less likely to be a nuisance to them[...] and whenever we have tried to get meetings at night - or change times they have said: 'Well, you knew what you were coming into when you put your name forward, we all have to make sacrifices and it suits us to come at this time so ... too bad.' (Scottish National).

Marie Vannet, a Tayside Labour councillor (who stood down in 1994) discusses how male councillors are impatient with 'excuses' and undermine women who have less time for preparation.

They forget that we've got the family commitments whether they like it or not. We dinnae get up in the morning and find a shirt ironed and our speech already done, because we had time the night before. There is an attitude still prevails that women shouldn't be here by some members. You can be open to patronisation from a lot of folk. I always remember one of the first debating speeches, and my sons were at secondary school and the other councillor she had wee ones, her and I were nae finished our speeches in the morning - and a

councillor said : 'What! you're no finished your speech yet ?' And that's when I thought, ' Oh, I see you've got creases in your shirt ironed; we had to get up and make sure the kids had their stuff and got to school first'. (Labour).

Yvonne Robertson, one of the youngest female councillors at Strathclyde, discusses the reluctance of men in political parties to take seriously the issue of the poor representation of women in politics and their failure to recognise the concrete differences between women's and men's lives and the resultant consequences for access to politics. She partly attributes this to a lack of understanding about the ways in which women and their lives have changed. She argues many political men are uneasy with women who don't easily fit stereotypes.

They have a real problem because, in the main, they're '50s' men - so women are cute and malleable, or they are their wives, or their Ma. And then there is this new breed of woman that they don't really have a 'scoobie' how that works and they don't try to understand.

She argues that the view still prevails that if women are interested in politics they will enter, and that their responsibilities are their own concern. She also suggests that this reluctance to understand may stem from an unwillingness to share power.

They don't try to understand, and I think that's the pitiable thing. They can't grasp that feminism, for want of a better word, is nothing more than fairness. It's about applying the logic that you would apply in any other situation to half the population! That's how simple it is for me, and yet they can't grasp. They are reluctant to share power. They are reluctant to give up any of their practices. They are reluctant to change what we do as a party; and they still think that if women are that interested they'd join anyway - no question of crèches etc. They don't try to understand any of the things that are going on in women's lives to try and encourage them to come into the party. (Labour).

Excuse me, I need extra because ...

The rules of the game for all aspects of public life are characterised by disembodied notions of 'fair play'; they do not include responding to the *needs* of others. Disembodied conceptions of justice do not allow for contextual components - the concrete realities of gendered lives (and lives differentiated by class, race or ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation). Formal justice and political rules of the game emphasise procedural fairness and do not require that needs be addressed nor adequacy of solutions assessed. This explains why there is so little impetus for rules to be bent - as it is commonly seen - to accommodate the needs of women to be

treated as equals. This results in women being faced with the choice of managing disadvantage or being caught in what Labour councillor, Jeannette Timmins calls the, 'Excuse me, I need extra because of...' trap which characterises women as needy and 'other'.

We need to be looking at what structures are in place that suit women. It always amazes me when we have long meetings for example they always talk about comfort breaks and - how can I put this in a way that makes sense? - OK they'll have a comfort break and they'll say five minutes, and I'll say how about quarter of an hour ? Stuff like this - maybe women have got their period and need slightly longer to do certain things - and men don't realise. So you need to make sure that whatever you are organising has to take account of women there and women's needs, and that's what's missing. And I think that's what I mean by a feminist perspective - that women have as much right to access to everything as men have without having to say, 'Excuse me, I need extra because of...' (Labour).

If difference is not legitimised as a political argument - then apparent impartiality in fact preserves the status quo. American writer, Iris Marion Young has argued forcefully that equal treatment privileges those who are already privileged. To characterise attempts by disadvantaged groups to gain positive change as 'special pleading', and to instead apply supposedly neutral notions of even-handedness, acts to obscure the reality of inequality. Marginal voices can be silenced, because dominant voices seem neutral and the norm (Young, 1989:257).

Indeed there is some evidence that equal opportunities employment legislation in Britain and elsewhere is being used increasingly by men. In Norway, also there has been controversy over a decision to amend legislation to implement positive discrimination in order to bring more men into the nursery and primary school sector. Feminists have been particularly critical, arguing that it diminishes the options for women. Such positive action as is allowed for women to access traditionally-male fields has tended not to work. Furthermore men who do enter traditionally female fields tend to move rapidly up the hierarchy, further restricting opportunity for women.(Skjeie, 1995).

Cockburn has pointed out that, in organisational life, the only option women are given is assimilation. To be an equal with men in the public sphere, she argues, you are required to become 'indistinguishable' from men (1991:164). Similarly, to be taken seriously in political life there is an expectation that women put aside 'womanly things' ; that they leave their baggage - the kids, the elderly relatives, the

laundry and the shopping list at home - out of sight. Scottish National councillor Kim Nicoll notes with exasperation the priorities of local government when, as a councillor, her petrol and travel expenses are allowed against tax; but the cost of child-care when she goes to council meetings is not.

If I'm going to a meeting and the family can't watch the boys then I have to pay for a childminder - and that's not a non-taxable allowance. I can get my petrol expenses but I can't get anybody to watch my kids! (Scottish National).

The common sense discussions of women politicians experiences reveal a commonplace assessment that political parties and assemblies are constructed for men - and that women's presence is contingent on women playing by male rules. Women's common sense is also characterised by an observation, sometimes uncritical, that men's distance from the concrete needs and demands of care affords them *privileged irresponsibility* on many levels, whilst women's care burdens place them at considerable disadvantage within the family, work and politics. However at present caring issues and concerns are seen as trivial and apolitical. Women who are excluded from politics are seen to be 'failing to come forward'; women politicians who point out the structural disadvantages of female responsibilities are seen to be 'bleating about child care'.

Women's Values - revaluing care

Intertwined with the strong sense of caring responsibilities as a disadvantage and constraint in women politician's common sense is an equally strong theme that they are also a source of strength and value. Many of the interviewees explore the need to place what Tronto has characterised as an *ethic of care* centrally in political and social life - although there is a struggle to see this as a legitimate political issue. Accompanying this is a marked reaction by many women against 'male' values and what is seen as the feminist project to emulate them. 'I don't want to be a man, thank you very much' was a typical reaction. (Reactions to feminism will be discussed in Chapter 7).

These concerns are sometimes more clearly articulated by women who are not feminists. Some women who define themselves as feminists are reluctant to step outside the androgyny, or sameness, that they have constructed as a justification for participating on the same terms as men. The testimonies of most women contain

contradictions, with elements of androgyny intertwining with descriptions of a woman's distinctive perspective. Liberal Democrat, Veronica Crerar, a veteran of local politics and public service and a non-feminist, outlines what she perceives to be the dilemma for women in politics.

The parameters are always set, have been set, by men - and feminists have tried to beat men at their own game [...] to succeed in business, and to succeed in politics, and to get to the top, and to be Mrs Thatcher and so on. And I don't think that is necessarily the answer, because I think society needs carers, and needs people doing the things that traditionally have been done by women - they don't have to be done by women. But I think until that work is equally valued you won't get the change [...] Women will be expected to do all the men's things *and* all the women's things as well. (Liberal Democrat).

Concerns also surface in reservations about simplistic solutions to women's family responsibilities in terms of state (or market) provision of child care. Betty Paterson, former Labour Finance Convenor of Tayside Regional Council, and mother of three now-school-age children sets out her concerns:

I think the care of children is *central* to *everybody's* lives, and it shouldn't be a women's issue - hopefully in the future it'll be society's issue [...] Talking about children, I'm not the type of feminist that's asking for 24 hour a day nurseries, that's wrong. I don't want my children to be brought up in an institution - I prefer that I can bring them up myself with the help of a partner or whatever. It's really for a much more equal society, where men and women don't have to work forty or forty-five hours a week - a much shorter week, flexible so that we can raise our children *and* have a satisfying career.

Labour councillor and feminist lawyer Sheila Gilmore outlines what she sees as women's particular concern for issues relating to 'the human life cycle in all its forms':

Women - it may be because of the way they are traditionally brought up - but I don't think it is only that, I think there is an interest in people; and in relationships - and what people make of those - is of particular importance to women. Whether, on one level, it's things like contraception and abortion; and what sort of provision is made there for young women and older women as well; right through to things like nurseries and education broadly; [...] the care of the elderly in the community; and health. I mean they are all along that string of the life cycle. It's not that men *aren't* interested in those sorts of things, because of course they are - but I think women have a particularly strong wish to make all that better. (Labour).

These concerns about the value of care, relationships and family life at common sense level, arising from everyday experience, articulate similar positions to care

theorists like Joan Tronto, who argues for a society which values care and where people can care and do other things:

In all, a society that took caring seriously would engage in a discussion of the issues of public life from a vision not of autonomous, equal, rational actors each pursuing separate ends, but from a vision of interdependent actors, each of whom needs and provides care in a variety of ways and each of whom has other interests and pursuits that exist outside the realm of care. (Tronto, 1993:168)

It is possible in this debate to see an intersection between theory and practice - where women are recognising, negotiating and articulating the contradictions they experience when they try to combine the different elements of their lives; and the sense in which they find contemporary political values and political fora as dissonating with their own needs and values.

As Jenny Chapman in her work on women in electoral systems in the former USSR, the USA and Scotland remarks:

The fact that the family still comes first for most women is not just a cultural hangover but a reflection of the values women want to see preserved. (Chapman, 1993: 225).

Maternal Practice - care as a political resource

Experience of caring and domestic labour was discussed by several women councillors as a strength and a political resource, for example, by Frances Duncan, Chair of Tayside Regional Council:

I think women in politics bring a even keel to things, I do think that. They bring a more common sense approach because I can listen to the men and the way that they talk - and the way that they will go about things is not the way I would go about things. I find also that men tend to jump in without stopping to think, whereas women - I think because of their background, probably having brought up a family, having to budget and juggle housekeeping money - women tend to draw back a wee bit and think before they act and also look through to any end product[...] Not just see things as black and white. (Scottish National).

There are parallels here between Frances Duncan's discussion and many of the themes discussed by Sara Ruddick and Joan Tronto, who argue that practical skills

and strategies, as well as values and modes of thinking arise from maternal practice (Ruddick), or from the general practice of care (Tronto). It is important to note that the invocation of the traditional skills of women's work has been used in politics - sometimes quite cynically - particularly by Margaret Thatcher and her housewife imagery (Webster, 1990). However the point made by supporters of the care standpoint is that these skills, strategies and values are transferable to politics - not in their narrow or traditional application - but in their *transformed* version. This point was also discussed by women councillors in Chapter 2. It is clear from the discussions around representation, that women believe they bring positive skills and experiences to politics. For example, female councillors argued that women generally - as a result of their domestic experience - are practical, plan ahead, are adept at problem solving, and recognise the bothersome complexity and implications of everyday issues, like child care.

I think women look at things in a totally different way from men. You can even see it in your own home, the way a woman will look at the practical side of life, the way her husband doesn't. She'll plan ahead for the future, she'll always see things coming. And I think women do that in politics as well - women in general have had a tough time for so long anyway that they really need us to be on their side. I mean just a simple thing, although it's not a simple thing it's a huge complex problem, like providing child care. It is so important and there are men who sympathise - I'll give them that some of them do - but I don't think they fully understand what a hold back it is for women not to be able to have child care they can afford and can count on. And that's just one thing, there are so many more. (Labour).

Councillors argue here, as they do in Chapter 2, that women can bring to politics strengths and specialist knowledge drawn from their experience at the 'coal face' of family and community life. In one of several emerging discussions about alternative criteria, Aberdeen Labour councillor, Rita Buchan understood her life experiences as a single parent as well-qualifying her to seek election as a councillor.

I had children , they were my first priority. I had experience of life, experience as a single parent after divorce - I knew what it was go from having money to not having money and wondering where the kids' next pair of shoes is coming fae, the next meal on the table etc. I had experience from work in personnel, and of debt counselling - so I was in position to help other people.(Labour).

Male politicians were frequently characterised in childlike terms, as being headstrong, unpredictable in temperament, emotional and demanding.

I dinnae think we have tantrums the same. I think men go in the huff and they take it more personally. I think we're mair open to discussion to resolve an issue without shouting and bawling. (Labour).

This contrasted with perceptions that women possessed qualities of patience and flexibility which gave rise to strategies which 'cool down' heated situations, for instance by listening and by finding compromises.

I think we can sit there and not get as het up as men - I think we've got the capacity - maybe that's just me speaking as a Liberal if you like - because I find I hope I have the capacity to see both sides of an argument [...] I think a lot of women have got this capacity for being able to see both side of an argument, and to be able to articulate that and bring a certain amount of common sense - and cool the thing down. (Liberal Democrat).

I think that's one of the things women bring to politics, they take a little time, take a little patience, they think things out - thinking ahead to the future, thinking how something is going to affect somebody else. (Labour).

Am I generalising here ? I'm basing a lot of what I say on what I see personally - so it's my experiences I'm obviously going on. I do think that women have a civilising effect and they can bring a higher quality to arguments - even if they're just sitting there listening half the time - that is a quality in itself. (Liberal Democrat).

Women councillors perceive that their experience of juggling roles has provided them with valuable managing skills, they see themselves as more efficient, more adaptable and more responsive than some male councillors.

I think [women] they tend to actually perhaps get to the point a little bit more quickly in their own heads because they deal with so many things at the same time. Particularly if they've got children and things like that - they have to be able to get rid of the chaff and get to the point. (Conservative).

These perceptions are similar to the findings of a large number of studies in the field of organisation and employment studies.² Brannen and Moss (1991) argue that working mothers have developed sophisticated time management strategies in response to their multiple roles and responsibilities, which are a valuable resource and result in increased efficiency and productivity. Organisational psychologist Cary Cooper has contrasted women's adaptability under pressure with men's rigidity.³

² For a survey of recent British studies on employment and family life see Brannen et al. (1994).

³ 'Work ethic stunts growth of New Man', *Guardian* (17.6.95).

Getting from Here to There - and what to do when you get there.

As discussed in Chapter 2, and in the literature, many women contend that they view politics differently to men. For example, it is claimed that women see politics as problem solving, aimed not at sectional interests but for the common good of the community. Women are said to prefer consensus and consultation as means of working. These claims resonate with many of the interviewees. They perceive the traditional view of politics as being about pursuit of power with more emphasis on winning and less emphasis on workable solutions.

However, women politicians who see themselves as having different values and as 'doing' politics differently face a dilemma - because there is a need to somehow get women 'in there' on men's terms, before they can do things on women's terms. Veronica Crerar expressed it as:

It's how you get from here to there that is the difficulty. If there are only individual women, they really perhaps have to fight men on their own battlefield. And, to some extent these women, Thatcher et al., have managed to succeed so far because they have been good at the man's game. The women who are not good at the man's game don't get through at the moment, and I think that is the difficulty of how you get from here to there; of how to make a major break-through on our *own* terms. (Liberal Democrat).

In a similar vein Yvonne Robertson, a young Labour Regional councillor and feminist talks about the alien nature of power play politics for women. She identifies male politicians as engaged in power games which women have little time and appetite for.

You have to use the games that are in play and they *are* games - and that's another thing, women don't generally have the time to play games! - but unfortunately it's a case of, 'Is this what the boys are up to today? Oh dear.' Sleeves up and get in.

But, echoing Crerar, she argues that until politics can be changed to reflect what women want it is, 'the only game in town'. Women politicians are faced with a hard choice: to start playing the 'boys' games'; or to be marginalised.

Now, it's not the way women operate. It is completely alien to what it is that you feel you need to do, but if you're faced with that kind of choice? I have to say, if you decide you're not going to play that game, then you're dead in the water - absolutely dead in the water. I've seen it happen in here and I can tell you women who will be coming back [after the elections] who will be no

further on; who will be marginalised further because of their support for the wrong candidate, because of an inability essentially to grasp that the big boys are not going to give up power, and we can't change anything unless *we* are holding power.

Yvonne Robertson has made the conscious choice to operate in the system as it currently is rather than as she would ideally like.

I am here primarily to do a job, but I'm very well aware that I can't do that job to the best of my ability unless I have power - so, it's the only game in town in here. It's not my choice of a game, it's their game, but I will bloody well use it to my advantage. And then, when I have power, if it falls into my lap [laugh] *Then you can call the shots!*

So it means *nothing* unless you're holding all the cards. Regardless of what it is you want to do, it is *completely* unachievable unless you have the clout to do it. Unfortunately, the only game in town is not one I'm particularly fond of, but I'll bloody well beat them at it just to make sure. I have decided clearly that what is important at the end of the day to me is that I can deliver what I have set out to deliver. (Labour).

Conservative district councillor Christine Richard explains it as a 'borrowing of men's clothes':

I think sometimes you have to borrow men's clothes and you have to be able to get inside the mind of a man - particularly in all the qualities that are admired in men: putting things across, being forceful, being determined, being decisive, which perhaps sit less naturally on women. (Conservative).

The question of how long individual women can work for change within male systems without being changed and incorporated by the system has been widely discussed. Individual women within political institutions live with large degrees of dissonance between what is and what ought to be (Eisenstein, 1991; Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). Several women in the study argued that structures had to be changed first, rather than expecting women to change things from within.

It's too much to ask women - the number of women who have been ground down and left by the system not even trying to alter it, just trying to fit in. (Labour).

Only a few women in this study were sceptical about 'different politics'. For example, Eleanor McLaughlin a former Labour Lord Provost of Edinburgh sounds a cautious note:

It's very easy to hide behind a wall of saying 'Well, women would do it differently'. If you're going to change - you have to tackle the world as it exists and saying women behave differently is no different from - you know most *men*

don't behave like power [politicians] - most people don't live their lives like that.

She argues that it is the nature of power politics that determines the way male and female politicians operate - if they are to be effective. She believes in pragmatism, and that it is the ends - ie effecting social change - that is crucial not the means.

Everything is do-able differently if at the end of the day you know what you want to achieve. But what I want to achieve is a better life for the very poor, and I could hang around being nice or I could say 'Bugger you! I'm sorry, Director of Housing, I'm not listening to the claptrap you're giving me. You are *not* going to put the rent up'. And not putting up the rent is more important than how I say it - or 'Repair that roof'.

So yes, of course it's possible for us to interact differently. But at the end of the day we are here to take power and give it to people who are powerless, and contemplating my navel isn't going to help too much in that! (Labour).

Calman Cathro, a Conservative member of Tayside Region - who classifies herself as 'a well-kent face' rather than a political councillor - observes:

I don't think that they behave differently, no. Women are the same as men. There are many people in this world, be they males or females, where a little power and they get just fair carried away with the whole thing. (Conservative).

Getting from Here to There: value changes amongst men?

Many women saw the potential for change through the changing attitudes of younger generations; and through the dramatic changes in women's participation in the labour market.

Young men are quite different, whatever Mrs Thatcher may or may not have done for this country she changed a lot of attitudes - and a hell of a lot of attitudes have changed among young men who would see things quite differently and understand women in the workplace, and understand women's issues. There's hardly a birth takes place that a man isn't standing there with his wife or partner.

Work arrangements became so different, the meritocracy came forward, and a lot of women were seen to be getting up on their hindlegs and saying, 'I'm as good as anybody else here' [...] Women themselves at that point said, 'If I'm out to work and you're out to work, we share the housework around here, you know.' And attitudes did change over that time. (Conservative).

I think that the permanent feature of women in the labour force is going to have, eventually, a much stronger influence. I mean, twenty years ago there were less than two million women in the labour force, there is now plus eleven - that I think is going to make a significant change. (Conservative).

Many women saw a gradual improvement with shifting patterns of social and economic life; and argued that there is evidence of a degree of value change amongst some younger male politicians. Several interviewees pointed out that a number of their male colleagues shared child care with their partners, although this was still unusual enough to be commented upon. The visibility meant some of the problems of child care were perhaps seen as more legitimate - less as a special favour or a 'mother's privilege'. For example, a number of interviewees were careful to use male examples when talking about the problems of child care, for instance male colleagues who had missed meetings because of caring commitments. Women saw the growing domestication of men as progressing their understanding of care roles and care issues and providing the potential for alliances. A number of councillors saw the greatest gap in attitudes and policy priorities between generations rather than genders.

The only way we'll get it changed is by involving out male colleagues and about letting them see the difficulties. I mean OK, there are two or three guys in here who are great, and there's one who doesn't work now but he's got a boy of fourteen and his wife works - and he has the same problems [...] But they're not all like that because there are so many old men who've never had to face the problem. (Labour).

On a personal level, several women, feminist and non-feminist, spoke about the way they had tried to avoid gender stereotyping when they raised their own sons and daughters, like Scottish National councillor Lena Graham.

I tried to teach them independence, mainly, and to go out and get on with their lives. As far as household chores, my son had to do every bit as much as the girls - he could iron his shirts and wash the dishes, and even cook mince and tatties as well as the girls could. (Scottish National, non-feminist).

Women spoke about their daughters being more confident and assertive than they had been when they were girls: 'they're not frightened to do anything' ; 'There's none of this only boys can do that' ; 'It's different from when I was at school'. And they spoke of their boys accepting a greater domestic role. For example, Deirdre Gaughan, entered elected politics after years as a grassroots activist fighting to save her local school. She has seven sons aged between eleven and 27. Although she does not particularly see herself as a feminist, she has brought all her boys up to be domesticated.

I'm bringing my sons up in that way . One son - he's as good, if not better, at doing housework than I am, and he's now moved in to live with his girlfriend. And I think that's essential, I think that's building your relationship. I think it's absolutely dreadful men that don't think they should do washing and ironing and all the rest of it. My boys are all trained like that - some of them are more reluctant because they've got a lazy streak, not basically because they're against doing it. When they show reluctance I say, 'Well, you want to have a wife and you want to be married and you want to be happy, you've got to do these little things. There's no reason why she should do it all'. (Labour).

Helen Wilkinson of the independent think-tank Demos, in an argument drawn from analysis of a longitudinal survey of British values, asserts that there has been a convergence of values between men and women in the 18-30 generation including a positive attitude to gender equality.(1994:19-27). However other research is more ambivalent, showing for example that traditional ideologies can reassert themselves in equalitarian relationships once couples have children (for example, Brannen and Moss 1991); and that fathers spend markedly less time with their children than mothers, even those women who work full-time. A recent NOP poll found that more than half of the fathers of under-15 year olds spent five minutes or less a day in one-to-one contact with their children. It suggested that men prefer hobbies and sport to spending time with their children.⁴ Indeed some councillors in the current study were pessimistic. Several interviewees spoke about the sexist attitudes of their own sons, 'I think they'll grow out of it - at least I hope so'. Others spoke about the persistence of sexist attitudes amongst younger councillors, 'trying hard to be the big boys'. A number of councillors believed that talk of change at societal level was over-stated, especially the evolving role of men:

I don't think the New Man bleedin' exists outwith what my son calls the luvvies. (Labour) .

Others believed that change had occurred but that 'New Men', who were more positive about women's values, were marginalised in a society which still equated *machismo* with success.

It is quite interesting too that the men who seem to be more accepting of women having an equal role in society, men who seem to be more interested in working in a more co-operative way are, on the whole, *less* successful in the men's world. And men who in many ways seem to be overgrown small boys, fighting over the biggest desk and whatever, seem to be the achievers. (Liberal Democrat).

⁴ NOP poll for the charity , Care for the Family, June 1995.

Challenging criteria - 'Have they no got a shopping list?'

Although sometimes couched in terms of 'what women know', rather than a legitimate political discourse, and expressed with humour, resignation and sometimes an uncritical acceptance of the inevitability of women's domestic personae, nevertheless women politicians do use *difference* to challenge hegemonic male values. Their discussions of politics, representation and power contain a challenge and a potential to subvert dominant constructions of political criteria and privileged power forms by advancing alternative models based on women's experience, values and a nascent political ethic of care.

Women have argued that they bring skills and resources to politics as it is currently constituted; they have also suggested the transformatory potential of an ethic of care. The challenge to the social and political construction of merit was discussed in Chapter 4 as a possible bridge between short and long agendas in politics (Webb and Liff, 1988). In the current study, there is a challenge to conventional constructions of political merit although it is an 'emerging', rather than a fully developed argument around which women can mobilise. There is a pervasive view that men's distance from hands-on caring concerns, and their tendency to compartmentalise their lives, results in rigidity and deficiencies as politicians. Labour councillor Jeanette Timmins argues that women make good politicians because they 'have other lives outside the council' in contrast to many male politicians:

It always amazes me the number of men who sit around here for hours on end, and you think: God, do they do nothing else? Have they not got another life? Have they not got a family? Have they not got a home? - Have they no got a shopping list? (Labour).

The valuable input of women's experience at the 'coal face of life' into social policy making was also discussed in Chapter 2 and several councillors argued, for example, that legislation such as the Child Support Act would not have been passed if there had been more women MPs. Women also frequently discussed the difficulties men encounter in recognising and dealing with the complexity of everyday social policy problems such as housing and child care. There is potential for this common observation to be transformed into a point of leverage. For

example Christine Richard, a Conservative councillor, argues that women's relative absence from legislatures that make social policy is unacceptable.

For a start we are roughly half the workforce in the country now, some 11 million plus women have paid jobs in the economy. Women in general terms also have the greatest influence on the family, whether it is the traditional family with husband, wife and two children - or whether it's more unstructured partnerships, single women bringing up families or whatever - and I think it is nonsense that we are so unrepresented in the legislature in the making of laws which affect the lives of all men, women and children in this country. (Conservative).

This argument finds close parallel in justice theorist Susan Moller Okin's critique of policy makers dealing with issues ranging from family policy to defence who have had no experience of caring labour.

These are the people who make policy at the highest levels - policies not only *about* families and their welfare and about education of children, but about the foreign policies, the wars and the weapons that will determine the future or lack of future for all these families and children. Yet they are almost all people who gain the influence they do in part by never having had day-to-day experience of nurturing a child. This is probably the most significant aspect of our gendered division of labour, though the least possible to grasp. The effects of changing it could be momentous. (Moller Okin, 1989:179-180)

Margaret Smith, convenor of Aberdeen women and equal opportunities committee, talks about women's preference for informality and their flexibility in thinking and discussion which leads them to work for greater accessibility and participation in politics - for instance holding open meetings with guest speakers and varying the style of meetings - to promote inclusiveness.

I think there is an appreciation of informality for freeing up thought and discussion; and for attracting the public to come and listen to you. That's why I like our arrangement of the women's committee and the sub committee, we often have a speaker to come and talk. It relies on informality as a positive force for relaxing people.

I hesitate to mention character things, but I think women on the whole would like to look deeper into why things are happening and therefore are prepared to discuss solutions other than just ordinary formal solutions. I am a bit mixed in knowing how to speak about this, because I actually think women *are* more interested in people, and politics is about people and not structures and therefore women are more likely to get solutions and decisions that are correct than men.

Now, that is a totally sweeping statement and you can understand why I was reluctant to make it, but I think there is something in there that you can glean, because other women will say the same thing - and I think it's a positive thing, to be more interested in people than structures. (Labour).

Margaret Smith makes distinction between what she calls 'formal' solutions and women's solutions and between people and structures. This preference for 'people' has been noted before and is usually posited in opposition to policy. However in terms of this study women do not see the two in contrast and are very clear that policy is about people. Political science has tended to present this as evidence of women as being community minded rather than political. However I suggest that the implications of Margaret Smith's discussion, which is echoed in varying forms in many of the interviews, is that women are concerned with care as a central political idea and as a standard; and work towards what Tronto has called an *integrity of practice*, where context-sensitive and effective solutions are negotiated. This argument is in emerging form it is not highly developed, and it is contested, particularly by women who believe that power politics is the only way politics can be done. But if reframed using the vocabulary of care formal solutions are viewed as lacking - as in Tronto's discussion - they are seen as failing to address underlying issues, needs and concerns and thus allude to 'bad faith'.

This is expressed in several ways - at the root of the critique is the rigidity of men's thinking and their unwillingness to consider different and differing viewpoints. This is expressed, for instance as 'Men have set ideas, women are more open and receptive to opposing views'; in terms of policy making men are seen as, 'glossing things over' or, 'going with the tide', or of engaging in confrontational politics which means that underlying issues are not resolved. Veronica Crerar another highly experienced politician, whose discussions also contain embryonic frameworks of care, uses the crisis around health as an example of how the old (male) politics - particularly at Westminster - does not work to create meaningful solutions.

The health service is at a point of crisis, we have to find ways of financing the kind of care that technology is able to provide and the kind of care our ageing population requires and this is a matter of extreme and acute importance to everybody in society. There are different ways of looking at that, but does anybody sit down and discuss this rationally? No.

The Tories put forward a highly materialist and economic way. There needs to be elements of that in it - but at the same time it is no use creating a two-tier system which is going to leave the most vulnerable and most needy in society

unprotected and they must realise that too . Labour slags them off and the real issues are never accepted.

Nobody is saying, This is difficult there are hard decisions to be made - we can't afford everything [...]Who is to make these hard decisions about what kind of care we are going to provide and who is going to pay for it , and how ? [...] I would like to believe that if there were more women involved at a much higher level there would be more of that kind of approach. (Liberal Democrat).

Moller Okin proposes that active parenting be a criteria for public decision-making (1989). However I would argue that is too excluding, furthermore it assumes that only parents care. I would agree with Tronto that it is the *generic* work of caring which should be seen as a cornerstone of active citizenship and as a valuable criteria for political life. If caring was recognised as a central practice and core value of political and social life, then one could question the competence of politicians and other decision makers (mostly men) who have little or no experience of hands-on caring. Caring work would seem an essential 'life experience' on any potential politician's curriculum vitae, without which one could be seen as being deficient of the skills needed to deliver political decisions based on complex judgements about competing needs. Furthermore women and minorities would appear more competent, better rehearsed in the practices and thinking required for exercising political power.

The Scottish Parliament - a bridge from here to there?

A number of commentators, most particularly Alice Brown, have charted the linking and intertwining of demands for gender equality with the broader demands for constitutional reform in Scotland to rectify what is widely perceived as a deficit in democracy, representation and accountability. In contrast to women's relative absence from earlier debates on devolution, women activists have involved from the beginning of the latest campaign in the late 1980s (Brown 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Levy, 1992). This broad mobilisation has included not only traditional women's groups, but also the women's movement (Breitenbach, 1990, 1995b). The presence and influence of women resulted in the Scottish Constitutional Convention committing itself in its first report to the 'principle of equal representation'.⁵

⁵ Scottish Constitutional Convention (1990.) For a detailed account of the various debates and developments see Levy (1992) Brown (1993, 1995a; 1995b, 1996).

Although the dominant argument has been around issues of access and equality, it is within the context of debates around the Scottish Parliament that some women have begun rehearsing arguments of difference. The perception that women will 'make a difference' has been a catalyst for the mobilisation of large numbers of women politicians, party activists and women's groups in Scotland to campaign for gender equality and women friendly practices in a new Scottish Parliament (Women's Claim of Right Group, 1991; Innes, 1992; Brown, 1995b). In common with the present study, there were perceptions that women were different in terms of 'doing politics', and that they would make a difference to the outcome of politics by bringing their own perspective, policy concerns and values.

Liberal Democrat Veronica Crerar was involved in the wide-ranging consultations undertaken by the Women's Issues group of the Scottish Convention through the now defunct umbrella organisation the Scottish Convention of Women (SCOW). She remembers that although there were disagreements about how things might be achieved particularly issues of mandatory quotas, there was a strong sense of common purpose among women from a variety of backgrounds.

It was recognised that we had more in common as women in the system than we had dividing us. And that a system which provided a much more co-operative, a system which involved more discussion and an evolving of decision making rather than just argument; a system that involved more in way of committees and so on; a system that involved reasonable hours of working; a system that involved reasonable payments for child care or othercare - all these things -this would benefit us all as women. We were all quite clear that what we did want was a system which would allow more women to take part and encourage more women to take part (Liberal Democrat).

There has been an understanding of the need for women-friendly structures to be in place at the start and a recognition that women had to act to ensure this because men, once established, would not willingly cede any of their power. Aberdeen councillor Margaret Smith poses the question:

Do you get women in first - or change conditions first ? The second. To get in and try and change things from the inside is a laudable attempt, but it's far too much work for women to do - men aren't going to do it. It's the analogy, 'I'm holding four Aces, why the hell should I give you one of them - even one of them?' Basically it's too much, it has got to be done from a structural level from outside and that's why it has to be quotas and the Scottish Convention.(Labour).

A number of Labour women, in particular, forwarded this analysis on the basis of their own experience and the experience of past colleagues.

The interviews in this study are characterised by their optimism about a new Scottish Parliament and the role women could play. The reasons women give for a striking preference for a Scottish Parliament are: firstly, practical in terms of their caring responsibilities ; and secondly, the strong belief that things will be done differently, and that women will make a difference. Many women express what can be described as a 'hopeful belief' that a Scottish Parliament will be the beginning of a new politics. The Scottish Parliament is seen as a long agenda measure, that of a transformed political arena operating on a transformed political agenda which would promote positive change and would incorporate the values and concerns of women.

They've got a marvellous blueprint drawn up for it. At the time I remember reading about it and thinking, That's it, that's what we want! (Labour).

This can be seen most graphically illustrated in the table following which outlines the gap in interest in standing for the Westminster and the Scottish Parliaments. It reveals that significantly fewer active women politicians are prepared to stand for Westminster than for a proposed Scottish parliament.

Table 6.1 comparison of women councillors interest in standing for the Westminster and scottish parliaments

	interested (prev tried)	interested	not interested (prev tried)	Not interested	Don't Know
Westminster	4%	10.5%	23%	60.5%	2%
Scottish Parliament	-	77%*	-	21%**	2%

* incl.4% only interested in standing for an independent parliament

** incl. 4% who would not stand because politically opposed

Around a quarter of the women councillors had taken some steps to stand for a Westminster Parliamentary seat. This may have involved getting onto an approved list or panel of candidates, to fighting selection contests for parliamentary seats, and actually fighting in a by-election or General Election. One Conservative woman had fought two elections, but in the intervening fifteen years had failed to secure another nomination. Three Labour women had challenged sitting Labour MPs and lost the selection contest. In two of the three cases left-wing women challenged right-wing sitting MPs. In the third case the challenge was mounted because of other concerns. One Labour councillor had been involved in a selection contest for the 1994 Euro Elections but had been unsuccessful.⁶ A minority of women (around 16%) are currently interested in standing for a Westminster seat. Reasons commonly cited against standing include family responsibilities and an unwillingness to lead the lifestyle of an MP; together with disillusion about the effectiveness of being an MP.

⁶ The Scottish Labour and Conservative parties did not field any women candidates in the 1994 European Elections; the Scottish Liberal Democrats fielded two and the Scottish National Party fielded two. Only one woman MEP, the SNP's Winnie Ewing, was returned in Scotland (Gender Audit, 1994).

I think it's the whole male female make-up in Westminster - it is really quite destructive, even with the Labour party. I know that is the case. A friend of mine works for an MP and said it was worse in Parliament than it was in NUPE! I said, 'Oh, it can't be' and she said 'It is!'... so all these fears were basically confirmed (Labour).

There was also a strong perception, particularly from Labour women, that women were extremely unlikely to secure a nomination for a winnable seat (see also Brown and Galligan, 1995). It appears that large numbers of active women politicians make a rational assessment about the practical difficulties, and the discriminatory and alienating practices and structures of a Westminster parliamentary career and therefore choose not to put themselves forward.

In contrast 72% said they would be interested in standing for a Scottish Parliament. Practical reasons such as travelling distances and the ability to combine their political and family lives were commonly cited, but strong themes also emerged about supporting decentralisation, wanting to be part of a new forum which would do things differently and an optimism about a new sort of politics. Women politicians whether involved in the Constitutional Convention debates or not clearly felt a much greater sense of allegiance to and ownership of the planned Scottish Parliament.

It would be new, it would be modern and hopefully traditions have to start somewhere- so let's start one today. I think it would be groundbreaking and I would be very interested in being in at the beginning of that. I think Westminster's a hopeless case in as much as it's just an entrenched old boys club. They have ways of doing things that they have been doing for hundreds of years (Labour).

I think a Scottish Assembly would be different because I think we really could effect real change. (Labour)

The establishment of a parliament in Edinburgh was seen as being more attractive to women than Westminster in terms of both removing certain practical barriers - and creating women-friendly structures. Women felt that members of a Scottish parliament (MSPs) would be better able to combine politics with family responsibilities than Westminster MPs in terms of travelling distance, but also that the blueprint for a Scottish Parliament implicitly recognised the value of family life with its advocacy of sensible working hours.

Sometimes I think, particularly men actually think the answer to a lot of the problems is purely a mechanical one - well if we had crèches at meetings and

we had this and we had that, then it would be much easier. But the thing about Westminster is not just the distance -but also the absolutely ridiculous hours, the times meetings are held at. A lot of women don't want to miss so much of their children's lives in any event. It is not purely a decision to send your children to boarding school, you've made a decision about what you want out of family life anyway. It's not *just* who is going to look after them, it is not just the practicalities, it's, 'Well, I don't actually *want* to be away from Monday night to Friday morning' or whatever it is , 'I don't want to *do* that every week'. (Labour).

Plans for child care provision and sensible working hours were highlighted as vital for encouraging women. A number of women also saw a new parliament - with a modern *modus operandi* - unlike the adversarial style of Westminster - as better fitting most women's preferred style of working. These views all echo findings by the Women's Issues Group of the Scottish Constitutional Convention (Levy, 1992).

However, again, there were reservations about any 'quota-type' mechanisms for ensuring gender equality. One Liberal Democrat who expressed the fear that overt discrimination against women might increase if the Scottish Parliament became a reality, because she predicted a great number of women would 'raise their heads above the parapet' and attempt to become elected members, nevertheless opposed gender balance measures because she felt that female MPs would be seen as tokenistic and marginalised.

The difficulty about the quota idea is that you then get the MPs and the women MPs and only the MPs count . Somehow we have to breakthrough on their terms - I think we have to get there in a straight fight. (Liberal Democrat).

Summary

This first section of the thesis has been aimed at exploring the discourses around women's access to politics (recruitment) and their presence once there. It explored them through the narratives of women councillors what Gramsci has called competing and contradictory elements found in *common sense* , in particular in this present case, the interplay between discourses of equality or sameness and difference. My argument is that new ways of looking at political activity and political values are found in incipient form in the common sense of many women politicians, feminist and non feminist, together with elements of hegemonic ideology which serve to obscure and maintain women's oppression and disadvantage.

This study into the attitudes and perceptions of female local politicians reveals complex and contradictory understandings of representation, equality and difference, justice and care. Furthermore the narratives reveal that differing concepts of justice and equality; and the vexed question of difference are, at common sense level, the discourses upon which women politicians develop their stance on representation, equal opportunities and women's programmes.

Some of the councillors interviewed were feminist, many were not. However a strong common thread emerged in their narratives across party about the paradox of domestic and caring labour: that women's experience and values arising from their role as carers is both a barrier and a resource - a reflection of the high value that women placed upon care.

There has been a reluctance to invoke difference or 'women's distinctive contribution' by feminist political scientists, and indeed some women politicians, because of the potential these arguments have to be used by reactionaries to reinforce stereotypes about women's role. Therefore, at present, the only legitimising discourse for increasing the number of women in politics is one of 'justice' or 'proportionality'. This approach has obvious limitations. It is clear from this study, and also empirical findings in many other countries, that the discourses of difference do resonate strongly with the perceptions and experiences of many women politicians. Indeed some of concepts developed by feminist justice and care theorists which are discussed in Chapter 5 exist independently in embryonic form in the narratives of politicians in this study. The parallels have been explored in Chapter 6. Section I concludes that new ways of looking at political activity and political values are found in incipient form in the *common sense* of many women politicians, feminist and non feminist, together with elements of hegemonic ideology which serve to obscure and maintain women's oppression and disadvantage. Their discussions of politics, representation and power contain an emerging challenge, in common with several feminist theorists. This is the potential to subvert dominant constructions of political criteria and privileged power forms by advancing alternative models based on women's experience and values, and a nascent political ethic of care (Chapter 6).

There is a need for a synthesis of various arguments of justice, difference and care in order to imbue what appear to be commonplace barriers to women's progress - in

particular the issue of caring responsibilities - with political urgency and moral legitimacy. There is opportunity to progress the representation debate by drawing upon new insights and new discourses. For example, if Tronto's four elements of care were to be applied to the problem of access to power, then political systems would be exposed as lacking 'integrity of practice'. Political systems and parties would be judged as merely complying with the most formal and detached elements of the political ideal of care, without following through with the specifics required for effective resolution of the democratic deficit. Just as in Tronto's earlier examples of large corporations who formally tackle a problem with no concern for the end result, political structures would be exposed as acting in 'bad faith'. For although they display some formal *attentiveness* ('caring about'), and *responsibility* ('taking care of') towards the issue of women's under-representation, in that they all, in principle, support the idea of increasing the number of women; there are serious failings in *competence* ('care-giving'), that is in ensuring that adequate, appropriate and effective action is taken. Finally there has been little progress in progressing *responsiveness* ('care-receiving'), which in this context would mean securing the involvement of women in the process, and incorporating women's own understanding of their needs.

Thus Tronto's typology is a useful tool of analysis to expose the shortcomings of current political systems. Continuing the analysis, in order to achieve integrity of practice radical restructuring of politics would be needed. Politics would, thus, have to fit in with caring lives and reflect the concerns of a society which placed care at its core whilst also enabling all its citizens to combine care with other human activities. I return to these themes in Chapter 9.

Section II of the thesis is focused upon the *presence* of women in local political assemblies; in particular it aims to explore the factors, conditions and structures whereby *simple presence* may be translated into *controlling presence* that is the motivation and the agency to shape political agendas. It further examines a theoretical expectation of certain feminist models that the presence of women within political elites, in this instance local government, may result in positive change for women; an expectation which resonates with the perceptions of many women interviewed. A case study approach is also taken to investigate the genesis and progress of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign, an anti-violence public awareness initiative common to all four authorities studied. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is

an ideal site to explore, in a real-life context, the hypothesis that there are structural factors which may inhibit or enable the development, expression and active pursuit of gendered politics.

SECTION II

Women in the Machine

7 Gender consciousness, political structures and political action

Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between gender, political structures and political action. It develops some of the themes from Section I about the ways in which women's contribution to elite politics might be distinctive. The main focus of the chapter is upon gender and political identity. It asks in what ways gender is relevant to women councillors as political actors; and under what conditions a politicised gender consciousness may develop. It also explores the conditions under which positive gender orientation may result in political action in terms of political agendas or policy outcomes. In contrast to the emphasis on discourse in Section I; Chapters 7 and 8 are predominantly concerned with processes and contexts.

This chapter begins by returning briefly to characterisations of women's politics, in particular the question of whether it is reasonable to assume that women share common interests as political actors? or are common concerns and goals shared only by feminists within the system? Do women *qua* women make a difference or is it only when women have a feminist analysis or work together in a conscious feminist collectivity that they have an impact, as feminist standpoint theory would suggest? The relationship between women politicians and feminism, and the women's movement is explored; and the utility of such a research focus is assessed.

The chapter then proceeds to explore women councillors' degree of political gender orientation, through their discussions of aims, their recognition of groups of women in need of political action, and their understandings of the relationship between gender and public policy. Following Chapman (1986, 1987) data are analysed to assess the gendered nature of women's political aims and the role of *unofficial* or *closet* feminists in progressing women's issues. Various factors which may enable or inhibit the development, expression and enactment of gendered politics are examined. Potential inhibiting factors such as realpolitik and tokenism are outlined; and the issue of critical mass is explored. Various enabling factors, both individual

and structural, are then examined, including experience of separate sex groups, and involvement with local government equalities structures.

Women's politics or feminist politics - where's the distinction ?

Women's politics is an ambiguous and contested concept; in particular there is a tendency to conflate women's politics with feminist politics. Do all women politicians have a gender perspective, or only feminists? Do women need a feminist consciousness before they can act in a distinctive way; or effect positive change for women? Are only feminist politicians harbingers or agents of change? How do you tell the difference? Are feminists and other women two discrete categories? These issues grumble away in the literature, but do not find resolution.

Antolini (1984) in her overview of studies about women in local government in the US summarises three features of a distinctive 'women's politics' suggested by the findings. Firstly, women's choice of delegate style; secondly, distinctive policy impact; and thirdly, Antolini suggests women politicians tend to recognise the connection between themselves and other women who either also aspire to office; or who want greater access to their government; or who want policy changes. Antolini uses the 'Queen Bees' and 'Sisters' typology (Staines et. al., 1974) to categorise female politicians. Queen Bees refer to professional women who feel little connection with other women. They believe that their success was entirely their own doing, and see other less successful women as lacking in ability or motivation. Margaret Thatcher is cited as a political Queen Bee. In contrast, Sisters perceive there to be a commonality of interests and concerns with other women *qua* women; believe that discrimination has constrained women, limited their opportunities and abilities; and feel that they share a responsibility for helping other women into politics (Antolini 1984: 36-37). Janet Flammang has summarised these features as a 'politics of connectedness' (1984: 12). The relationship between a women's 'politics of connectedness' and feminist politics is not explicitly drawn.

Others argue that when we are talking about women's values, we are talking about the engaged political values of feminists. Conover, for example, suggests that the gender gap in political values amongst voters in the United States is almost entirely as a result of the presence of feminists. She argues that women differ in their political values to the degree to which they identify with feminism. Feminists are

more likely to express 'women's values', particularly sympathy for the disadvantaged than either non feminist women or men (1994:58). Moreover, theorists like Dietz contend that feminist consciousness is not enough to effect change but has to be allied to democratic political values (Dietz, 1985; Conover, 1994: 52-54).

The evidence of contemporary studies in Europe, North America and elsewhere suggests a complex and ambiguous relationship between women politicians and feminism. In most surveys few female politicians relate simply or wholeheartedly to the label feminist, few stand on feminist platforms. However there is strong evidence that a significant proportion of women politicians are 'pro-equality' and sympathetic about women's rights (Chapter 1, Chapter 2).

Two problems immediately present themselves when attempting to explore women political activists through the prism of feminism. Firstly, there are difficulties in constructing shared definitions of feminism. Contemporary feminism is characterised by its theoretical diversity and is riven by political divisions. Lovenduski and Randall, whilst acknowledging any definition is problematic, suggest that feminism includes 'all ideologies, activities and policies whose goal is to remove discrimination against women and to break down the male domination of society.' (1993:2). This definition is also used by Breitenbach (1995b) in her analysis of the women's movement in Scotland.

Secondly, to whom should the label apply? In the case of the study of female politicians, should the label *feminist* be only applied to women politicians who have consciously identified themselves as feminist? Or should women be included who reject the label or who feel no connection with feminism but who nevertheless have pro-equality sympathies or programmes? These issues are explored within the context of women councillors definitions of, and attitudes to feminism; and the relevance of gender, if any, in the formation of their political identity.

Attitudes to feminism

Firstly, women's perceptions of and identification with feminism 'proper' were explored within the interviews. Women politicians were asked to define feminism to assess whether there were any shared definitions. They were asked whether they

self-identified as feminists and discussed the various connotations and the practical issues surrounding common constructions of feminism. In addition, two related questions were asked about the contemporary women's movement. Women were asked whether they perceived themselves to be a part of a loosely defined women's movement and, after Chapman (1986, 1987), they were questioned about whether they felt the women's movement had had an impact upon their lives, directly or indirectly.¹

These direct questions were designed to elicit women politicians relationship with feminism 'proper', and the much-observed 'I'm not a feminist but...' syndrome, before further exploring issues of gender identification using different questions and criteria. It was expected that many women would be resistant to defining themselves as feminists in response to direct questions, especially those from parties other than Labour. A number of factors would suggest such as reaction, including 'super-inhibitors' such as party discipline, realpolitik, tokenism and backlash.² The data were also expected to provide an indication of the degree and ways in which women are inhibited from or enabled to act individually or collectively as agents of change.

Data findings : Identification with feminism.

Jenny Chapman's innovative study of women candidates in the 1984 Strathclyde District Elections (1986, 1987) explored issues of gender consciousness among female local politicians. Her sample was drawn from the larger Strathclyde District Election Study (SDES). All the sample were asked whether they identified as feminist; 18.6% were self styled feminists and a further 21.4% were feminists with reservations (Chapman 1987, table 1:325). In the present study, all the women were asked directly if they would define themselves as feminist: Fifteen out of the 53 interviewees were self-defined feminists (28%); nine women (17%) said they were qualified feminists.³ In addition, four women (7.5%) said they *were* feminists but that they would in no way accept the label publicly:

¹ See interview schedule in Appendix A.

² It was also expected that for a variety of reasons, including media stereotyping, ridicule etc, some women would not identify as feminists although they might share common goals and beliefs (Carroll, 1984; Cockburn, 1989, 1991).

³ In this chapter, each interviewee will be identified by her self-defined relationship to feminism: self-defined feminist, qualified feminist (incl. closet feminists); and non-feminist. This is

Not because I'm not a feminist but because that's too easy a target again [...] if I say I'm a feminist then I've immediately got a problem that I have to address - so I want to address all things without having to take on an extra fight (Scottish National).

The perception that being publicly identified with feminism has a political cost was echoed by several women, both feminist and non feminist, and is dealt with in more detail later in the chapter when looking at the phenomenon of 'backlash'.

The findings show that higher proportions of women in the 1994/5 sample (52.5%) identify themselves with feminism than in 1984 (40%). The significance of these findings must be viewed with caution for several reasons. The samples the data are drawn from are different; the latter being a stratified sample of candidates for the Strathclyde district council elections in 1984; the former based on all women councillors in four target authorities, which can be argued to be 'pro-equality'. However as 'benchmarks' they may suggest a number of trends: that in the intervening period between the two studies women councillors have become more feminist either in general, or as a result of younger cohorts come through the system. Chapman found her younger sample more feminist than her older sample. Alternatively, it could be suggested that women in 'pro-equality' councils are more feminist than women councillors more generally. This trend has a number of possible explanations, firstly, that prior feminists have gained entry to these councils and have altered the agenda; or conversely that the conditions operating within 'pro-equality' councils may allow women to develop a feminist orientation.

Definitions: What is feminism?

I like the Rebecca West definition - anything that differentiates me from a doormat! (Labour, self-defined feminist).

It's difficult - I couldn't think about that, but I *know* I'm definitely not one. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

The discussions reflected a wide range of standpoints in relation to feminism and incorporated a number of broad and narrow definitions of feminism. The tension between sexual difference and equality was evident in a number of the responses as were different beliefs as to the relationship of feminism to these strands.

intended to allow for contrasts and overlaps between the attitudes of those who do and those who do not identify with feminism.

How would I define *my* feminism? I am not at all unhappy with being female, I think being a woman is great [...] and I think women in general are just disrespected and trivialised [...] because there is an imbalance of power. And I think feminism is nothing more than fairness [...] it is about women legitimately being taken as equal partners on this earth - but, having said that, accepting that there are differences in the sexes (Labour, self- defined feminist).

I keep saying I'm not separate from anybody else. I say I'm not a feminist because I say I'm a *personist*.. I know it annoys people when I say I'm a *personist* because I look at people, not their gender. I don't think my gender has anything to do with it either. (Scottish National, non feminist).

It's really just about having a voice for women, at all levels of society. No just doing what we're told and that's the end of the matter! (Labour, self- defined feminist)

My own personal definition of feminism is [...] to recognise that there are distinctions between the male and the female, and I don't care whether its nature or nurture, and to make sure that society can adapt itself so that neither sex falls into being unequal with the other. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

There are so many different definitions, you can talk to five different feminists and get different definitions. That's why I say I'm nae really a feminist. I'm a woman and I fight for that corner - and if I fit into someone's description of feminist, then fine but I wouldnae fit myself. (Labour, non feminist).

Some women recognised feminism as a broad church, but feminism was frequently defined, within the interviews, as 'other'. Women tended to focus upon one aspect of feminism and posited themselves in opposition. For example, women who saw themselves as in favour of equality characterised feminism as promoting female supremacy; women who saw sexual difference as significant defined feminism to be strictly equality, 'feminists want to be like men'.

I'm not sure how much of a feminist I am. I'm very supportive of some issues - but I kinda like being a woman. (Labour, qualified feminist).

Even women who defined themselves as feminist expressed some degree of ambivalence. Criticism was voiced about 'extremist' feminism with which they did not identify. Alternatively feminism was characterised as having once been extreme (typically in the 1970s) but now being more palatable. In some cases, non-feminists spoke about feminism being necessary in the beginning, but going 'too far' now. Feminism was seen as being problematic both in terms of image and substance.

It's helped a lot of women become equal citizens - and that's great. But it's swinging too far. Women I speak to feel the same way as men. It's almost the extent of, by going too far they risk, doing the opposite - of damaging women. Men have been quite supportive, to support women to be equal. But men now say 'Wait a minute'. [Feminists] risk losing their sympathy - they can do their cause more harm than good. (Conservative, non feminist).

In particular several women spoke about the lack of connection between some strands of feminism and women's ordinary lives and needs. Feminism was seen as censorious of women's traditional caring roles:

Many women in the more radical hardline leftist feminist groups have done nothing to try and understand the lives of the women that, for example, I represent. Women who are quite happy being housewives and mothers [...] if you like subordinating their career paths to be mothers and homemakers; or the other women who are at the very bottom end of the spectrum who live lives that are littered with abuse. There's been no compassion at that end of the feminist movement and I think they've alienated and isolated a lot of women who feel no part of it but who, if we were to all sit in a room and say, 'Do you think this is fair?' ; 'Do you think that is fair?' At the end of it would all come out and say 'No, this is grossly unfair!'[...] So I think the sisterhood is to blame as well. (Labour, self-defined feminist)

No common definition of feminism and few shared meanings emerge from the interviews. However there are several themes to note: interestingly, although feminism has been perceived as synonymous with campaigns for equality in both the 19th and 20th centuries; in the current study 25 women (47%) defined it as being different from equal opportunities. This suggests that as equal opportunities has become more 'mainstream' and, arguably, 'safe' as a concept it has been uncoupled from feminism. Thus the process has not conferred respectability by association upon feminism, but rather feminism has been recharacterised and remains as 'other'. Many women politicians do not see a connection between feminism and equality of opportunities work.⁴

Well I think that equal rights are absolutely *right* , I don't see that as a feminist issue. It is an *issue*, there must be equal rights and there aren't somewhere along the line. And if women fight for that, fine, but I would like to think that men fight for it as well. (Conservative, non feminist).

Feminism was also perceived by a few interviewees, all Labour councillors, as having careerist and middle class connotations. Feminists were characterised as

⁴ In addition, when women were discussing the 'flaws' of feminism 17 (32%) characterised feminism as partial or particularist.

'airy fairy academics' or 'neurotic, anorexic, politically correct women'; they were not seen as speaking for working class women and their experiences. This reflects the debate, both historic and on-going within socialism, about the nature and relevance of 'The Woman Question' and the suspicion of feminism as a bourgeois diversion to the class struggle. There were however, also a number of feminist councillors who had been active in the trade union movement who countered this criticism and saw feminism as firmly rooted in working women's concerns; and saw strong traditional working class women as proto-feminists.

I got my feminism from my Mum - my mother probably wouldn't call herself a feminist - she'd probably go, 'What does that mean, is that like a lesbian or something?' 'No Mum, it's a *feminist*' My Mum's aye been the boss, aye been the organiser - did the discipline. My Mum kept charge o' the money, she ran things. So I was brought up [...] really independent. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

As noted earlier, two main themes of concern can be drawn from the interviews, these are problems with the stereotyped image of feminism and problems with the content of feminism. Both these have resulted in real and perceived 'costs' in terms of public and political reaction to feminists. Women, both feminist and non feminist, discussed why feminism was perceived as unpopular, and why many 'pro-equality' women rejected the label 'feminist'. The major problems with feminism were seen to be its real or stereotyped image of extremism; and the reaction or 'backlash' of men. Almost half the interviews raised both these issues⁵.

I don't see the need for me to go down a feminist path - I've never felt the need, it's never been proved to me. I see it as being counter productive. People who are heavy on the feminist thing actually alienate people instead of trying to get them round. It is compromises I look for - I hate extremism. To me, the feminist movement actually does more harm to women and equality by being extreme. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Closely allied with this was a cluster of criticisms of feminists being or being perceived to be anti-man, lesbian and/or unfeminine. These perceptions closely mirror the media images of feminism both during the height of the contemporary women's movement and also the characterisation of feminists in the 19th and early 20th Centuries⁶.

⁵ Characterisations included: extremism (real) n.25 (47%); extremism (stereotyped) n.18 (34%); reaction or backlash of men n.26 (49%).

⁶ See for example, Jeffreys (1985).

I have found that feminism has been defined by very over the top women, militant feminists who really come out as being so anti-male that it worries me. (Scottish National, non feminist).

They attach as many unattractive labels as they can to it like aggressive, like bossy, like pushy, like narrow agenda. Where they are stigmatising, they'll also attach lesbian to it - like menhating. They'll attach all those agendas to it, but the truth of it be told, it is very simple; it is women wanting to be treated as human beings instead of as doormats. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Some of the more rigorous feminists have probably problems with their own sexuality - which has never really been an issue for me, I am comfortable with men. (Scottish National, non feminist).

Many of the interviews suggest that femininity is an important and contested terrain for women politicians. Perceptions of femininity are still important to many women, and feminism (either stereotyped or real) is perceived as anti-feminine. This was further developed in a little over half the interviews where women were asked to define femininity and discuss its importance to themselves. Some equated femininity with traditional notions, with various degrees of criticism and/or approval; others saw femininity as prescriptive and socially constructed; others equated femininity with being a woman. There was no clear consensus, some feminists also found the notion of femininity important and relevant, other women saw feminism and femininity in opposition to each other; and some women rejected both feminism and femininity, although most women spoke about the importance to their identity of being a woman and about how they valued their femaleness.

Femininity smacks of weakness and dependency and prettiness and I don't particularly like it and I don't think particularly that type of thing dominates women's thinking these days - it's a bit *Marilyn Monroe*! (Conservative, qualified feminist).

It doesn't bother me if a man puts me to the inside of the street if we're walking along, or holds a door open for me. I like to dress as a woman, it is important for me to look good. I like to hear remarks that I am looking nice. (Labour, non feminist).

The kind of thing that springs to mind when you say femininity is probably kind of frills and pink ribbons and [...] that's not important. But being a woman is important and never wanting to deny it - even when you are having a bad spell during the month. I never actually get to the stage where I think I would rather be a man - because I wouldn't, I *like* being a woman. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Femininity is something which I find almost as unsatisfactory as feminism! It's being the little woman and being pretty and pleasing and I feel being a *woman*

is much more important. Womanliness is something I would rather achieve: being co-operative, sensible, community-minded and caring. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Femininity exists in a complex relationship with both femaleness and feminism. The evidence suggests several ways in which it may influence women's agency to promote positive change for women within politics. Notions of femininity, some prescriptive, some descriptive, are used to articulate women's own sense of how to look and behave; and in some ways to place value upon their female identity. Feminism, in contrast, is depicted as equally prescriptive but as negating femaleness. Femininity translates in politics into notions of appropriate and inappropriate *modus operandi* for women politicians. Women therefore sometimes feel alienated from some of the constructions (real or stereotyped) of feminism which they see as in conflict with femininity.

There is a perceived conflict and maybe this has been one of the problems that feminism has been tarred somehow by being a sort of bra-burning, overall wearing, no-makeup, short back and sides with lesbian tendencies ! - all the sort of generalities that have grown up around feminism as if somehow feminism equated with lack of femininity and aping men . Now, I don't think that is what feminism is about at all, I really don't - but I think that has done damage. (Conservative, self-defined feminist).

A detailed analysis of the constructions of femininity and its usage within elected politics by both women and men is needed, however this brief discussion suggests that notions of femininity are contested but still important to many women. Many women politicians in the current study rejected, or partially rejected, feminism on the grounds of strategy and preferred modes of working. For some women, this was informed by traditional and prescriptive perceptions that women should not be 'pushy'; or have 'sharp elbows'. The definition of femininity forwarded by this older Scottish National councillor is illuminating:

Femininity means don't try to score points off your male colleagues, don't try to be better than them, just be yourself. Dinnae go banging on doors saying, 'I am a woman, I deserve to get this that or the other'. (Scottish National, non feminist).

In other cases, there was some degree of recognition of shared goals with feminism. However, just as women are characterised in the literature as being unhappy with male modes of politics, preferring consensus and consultation; so many women politicians were unwilling to identify with feminism whose characteristic tactics

and style of working they perceive to be extremist, exclusive and confrontational ie. rather male ways of doing things. Feminism is seen as inappropriate and is also rejected as a strategy on the grounds of efficacy.

I am not a feminist in that I am not going to push the woman's cause to the exclusion of everything else. I am not a Germaine Greer as she was in by-gone days; I am not a strident women's campaigner, I prefer to be thought of as [...] a reasonable model to follow or copy - I do it by example. I'm a woman and I want to change things from within, and I want to do it in as least contentious a way as possible because I think that's the way you get things done. (Liberal Democrat, non-feminist).

Like my Granma used to say: 'You'll get a damn sight more in this world out of offering a teaspoon of honey than shouting and yelling.' (Labour, non-feminist).

There is also evidence that the concept of femininity - or rather the accusation of feminists' unfemininity - is used by men to delegitimise some forms of behaviour or political tactics; and to attempt to prevent women working together. However, this process is not simple and any conclusions drawn from the data must necessarily be tentative. The process incorporates not only implicit (and sometimes explicit) attempts by men to police women by using cultural censure and political hostility, but also involves the rational assessment by women about the most desirable and pragmatic methods of achieving workable political relationships and practical results.

If somebody is labelled a feminist then men's hackles rise immediately - they've almost switched off before you've entered the room [...] I always say that I know which side my bread's buttered on and I can manipulate the system to suit myself - and you get an awful lot more achieved by working with than against, and I think the label feminist - that's you labelled and you can expect little co-operation. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

These themes of feminism's negative image, coupled with men's reaction to feminists 'Men feel threatened by the label feminist', and their specific targeting of feminists (backlash) recur frequently within the interviews; and figure strongly as reasonings about the perceived reluctance of 'pro-equality' women to be identified as feminist.⁷.

Some women don't like labels full-stop and I think that the word feminist has had such a bad press in the past that possibly women are frightened that if they're labelled a feminist, they're some sort of freak and perhaps they feel that

⁷ Dislike of labels, n.21 (40%).

by remaining unlabelled they can achieve more than by supporting a badge saying 'I am a feminist' . (Labour, self-defined feminist).

There's a view that men don't like it very much and if you want to be thought of well by men you'd better not be a feminist! (Conservative, self-defined feminist).

There is need for further analysis as to how useful a label feminist is for women politicians, and how successful the campaign to undermine and demonise feminism has been. Are women being politically careful to avoid all connotations of feminism whilst pursuing pro-equality or women's issues? There is some evidence that a commonplace tactic of male resistance to change is to 'label' women, and undermine them as effective politicians if they become 'tainted' with women's concerns. Several women also spoke about the barracking they encountered from male colleagues if they were seen to get together in a group as women, 'they think we're plotting!' In one authority, this nervousness had spilled over into hostility when a group of women, who had been nicknamed 'the knitting circle', started running successful candidates for senior council positions.

It's OK, men can go to the pub and have their drinks, and they can make their networks, and make sure that whoever they want to get certain positions do. But women, if women are seen as being supportive of each other - that's somehow more threatening [...] That's what it is about, it is about power, isn't it? and that they're frightened. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Two councillors, neither of whom classify themselves as feminists, discussed 'backlash' - the ways in which men immobilise women who campaign for positive change.

It's only my experience, but in men 's minds they say, 'Oh God, you're not a feminist?' They think you're going to be spouting women, women, women all the time because that's what their idea is and probably, dare I say it, they think of a feminist as being a lesbian. I'm positive they think, 'Oh, there must be something wrong with you, you're always fighting for women'. (Labour, non-feminist).

I've been called an uppity feminist, but I don't accept that I'm a feminist. I think if you stand up for yourself, sometimes people don't like it. (Scottish National, non feminist).

The 'labelling' or stigmatising of feminists and feminism as 'loony' or 'extremist' has been a feature of the reaction to the women's movement world wide. For women operating within mainstream politics, overt association with feminism can be

particularly difficult. Lovenduski (1986) observes as do Currell (1974) and Vallance (1979) that women politicians may be interested in women's issues but that interest is not converted into action because it is perceived as being a political and personal risk. There is a fear that women politicians may not be taken seriously if they become identified with a women's agenda. Vallance and Davies (1986) study of women MEPs in the European Parliament report the 'credibility' problems women face upon becoming associated with 'feminism' or 'women's issues'. American political scientist Susan Carroll explains the discrepancy between women political candidates high levels of *attitudinal feminism*, that is supportive attitudes to women's rights, and their low levels of *behavioural feminism* as rooted in women's perception of the political risk in becoming publicly associated with feminism. Carroll classifies such politicians as *closet feminists*. They may be committed to women's issues and the goals of the women's movement but 'their feminism remains hidden from public view' (1984:319).

Carroll suggests two alternative explanations of the 'closet feminist': firstly, that women may hide their feminism intentionally because they are afraid of being stereotyped or seen as 'narrow'; alternatively, women are not aware of the congruence between feminism and their own views and concerns. They do not consciously identify themselves with feminism (1984:320).

Female local councillors and the Women's Movement : identification and support

The current study further explored women politician's identification with feminism through a series of questions relating to the women's movement. The definition of the women's movement was kept deliberately unspecific. The interviewees were asked if they considered themselves to be part of the women's movement.⁸ Nineteen women (41%) identified themselves to be part of the women's movement and a further 15 (33%) saw themselves as positioned on the periphery, including one woman who saw herself as a member of the women's movement as a role model to other women. Ten women (22%) did not see themselves as involved in any way.

⁸ 46/ 53 women discussed this issue. The percentages are thus calculated from a base of 46. In addition two women (4%) answered 'don't know'.

Interestingly, feminism appears to have become partially uncoupled from the women's movement in a process which parallels the separation of feminism and equal opportunities noted earlier. Questions on the women's movement did not appear as contentious as the feminism questions. More women saw themselves as members of a women's movement than defined themselves as feminist. In particular women were less likely to *reject* the idea of membership outright. Only one in five women disassociated themselves from the women's movement compared with almost one in two women who rejected the feminist label.

Table 71 Comparison of female councillors' identification with women's movement and feminism

	Identification		Qualified Identification		No Identification		Don't Know	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Women's Movement	19	41%	15*	33%	10	22%	2	4%
Feminist	15	28%	13 **	24.5%	25	47%	-	-

Questions: Do you feel you are a member of the women's movement?; Would you describe yourself as a feminist?

* includes 1 case of membership as a role model

** includes 4 women who are self-defined 'closet feminists'

I think we probably *all* are in different ways.(Labour, self-defined feminist).

I think I probably have to be part of women's movement by the very fact that I am a woman who has reached this position in politics. I suppose as a kind of role model, but I don't think that the women's movement has changed anything for me personally. I feel I have got here on my own strengths - I have ploughed my own furrow (Labour, non feminist).

Yes, subconsciously - it's just the ideas are adopted without even realising it. It's only when you can look back in 1994 and say, 'God, in 1924 we would never even be *thinking* thoughts like this!'. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

After Chapman (1986, 1987) women were asked whether the women's movement had an impact on their lives. Chapman found that 62.9% of women perceived that the women's movement had had an impact upon their lives(1987).

In the current study almost three quarters of the women who addressed the question (73.5%) said the women's movement had had some effect, directly or indirectly, upon their lives.⁹ Several women also spoke in general terms about the impact of the women's movement on society, and several spoke about the impact of change for their children. Some 27 women (58.6%) thought the women's movement had had a great impact or an impact upon their lives; a further 7 (14.9%) thought it had had some impact; whilst 11 women (23.9%) thought the women's movement had had little or no impact upon their lives.

I haven't thought about it - I'm just me and I go and do what I'm elected for and it really hasn't crossed my mind. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Oh it's affected my life enormously, in many ways it gave me the platform I was looking for. I felt comfortable with it and I could see how I could actually bring about change - and the whole knock on effect to myself and how I view myself and how I operate as a politician, how I operate in the home, my work - it's had an enormous effect. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

I'd be where I am now with or without a women's movement - oh aye, because I've been in local politics 32 years. (Labour non feminist).

You simply can't deny it - although I'm not saying that it has always been a good influence. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

It has affected me. I now know that you don't have to settle down and get married and have kids. You know that you can live on your own, you know you can survive on your own and earn your own living; that you don't need to be looked after by a man - that's what the women's movement has made me realise! (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Basic things like the fact that in my job there is equal pay - there *is* equal pay in fact - there may not be equal promotion but there is equal pay. (Labour, self-defined feminist)

It is also striking how many women saw links between themselves and the suffrage movement and clearly positioned themselves within an historic movement and an international movement.

Certainly I wouldn't be in the position I am today if women at some point in time hadn't campaigned for women to have the vote - for women to be elected members - even just for the right to do something rather than stay at home and have kids, to be hitched by my age, which is what my mother thinks I should be doing. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

⁹ 46/53 women discussed this issue. The percentages are thus calculated from a base of 46. One woman answered 'don't know'.

[The women's movement] has given me opportunities. I wouldnae be a councillor if it wasnae for the suffragettes, getting me the vote. The whole thing's gone on. There's women out there - it's great that we're all doing our own pitch - the Timex women, the Greenham Common women, the trade union women, the miners wives, they're all there.

I wouldn't be here if it wasnae for these women, and I need to keep going to give my daughter the opportunity of even better things. I look at my daughter and think, 'Things could be better for you.' My upbringing wasnae aboot education [...] My upbringing was because of the [housing] scheme I was on - everybody went, 'Just you go in the mill' because that's what we had. I look at her and I can see better things. She complains that girls don't do football at her school and it's no right! (Labour, self-defined feminist).

The women's movement appears to be seen by the interviewees as less contentious than feminism. The women's movement emerges from the discussion as a loose collectivity which is perceived as giving practical support to women. It is not seen as being ideological but rather the manifestation of women's solidarity. Women would also appear to view it as a diffuse cultural phenomenon.

I certainly think it has been a great help and the knowledge that there are so many women out there all beaver away at the same aims, in lots of ways whether it's: in the factory; or in the community; or in the office or the bank where they're trying to get through the glass ceiling; or equal pay for equal work in low paid jobs. There are so many women out there. It has gone back in the last ten years but women know too much now - they won't let it go back all that far. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Being a loose member, if you like? [...] it has given me the feeling that I've had the encouragement almost, if you like, to do something that I might not have done [...] Women have looked at you and [...] said, 'That's great!' They don't think, 'Why are you not at home looking after the kids? So, because there has been that change in general attitude, it is much more acceptable and I've benefited. It would have been frowned on in my mother's day if she had gone out and done this. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

It is possible that this more inclusive definition of the women's movement may be distinctive to the Scottish context. There is a high level of networking between a wide range of women's groups, partly as a result of geographical size and partly as a result of the widespread mobilisation and collaboration of women around the issue of constitutional reform and the representation of women in a Scottish parliament.¹⁰

¹⁰ Networks include the Scottish Joint Action Group and the Scottish Women's Co-ordination Group which, amongst other things, has compiled a women's Scottish Plan of Action for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995.

The study highlights the complex relationship between women politicians, feminism and the women's movement. The majority of women councillors feel a sense of connection with other women and would seem to perceive themselves as part of a loose collectivity of women. The findings are also suggestive that femininity, although contested, plays a key role in mediating women's attitudes to feminism and to political behaviour and preferred strategies.

However considerable difficulties remain if one uses feminism as an indicator of a distinctive women's politics for individual or collective actors. Many studies (eg. Merritt, 1980) uses such minimal definitions of feminist orientation (economic equality, equality in domestic roles, political opportunity) that most women in this study, or indeed in the general population, would 'pass' as attitudinal feminists. Only two in the current study actually identified as anti-equality for women. The two women, both Conservatives in their sixties, said they were prejudiced against women. However, they both referred to themselves as old-fashioned and out of step with contemporary views.

Well I have very strong views on equal opportunities. I don't see too many of them [women] down the drains and things, I don't see too many of them in the coal-mines, I don't see too many of them stoking ships . They want equal opportunities in the jobs that suit them - that's where I take issue with this 'equal opportunities', I really do [...] They go on about unemployment and I say when I was married in 1956 unemployment was one-and-a-half percent - and if women are taking the jobs - men's jobs... I mean, this is true - they don't give up. They have their babies and they go back - but they want *us* to provide crèches for their babies. I'm still old-fashioned enough to say if you bring a child into the world you look after it - but it's not a modern view, things are changing terrifically. (Conservative, non feminist).

However despite having highly traditional views in some respects, both women have served on their own authorities' women's or equal opportunities committees, and have been 'useful' in supporting some of its work, in particular anti-violence initiatives.

In contrast, two other women councillors, also Conservative, were attitudinal feminists with sharp feminist analyses of gender relations, but lacked any political motivation to act for change. Thus minimal definitions obscure rather than illuminate the complex inter-relationship between attitudes, motivation, agency and action. The problem also remains about using classifications which do not respect women's self-definition.

Because of the aggression - I don't want to be labelled, I don't want that. I think I have worked very hard to be a moderate individual in all aspects and feel that accepting that label would be quite against my character. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Furthermore, a distinction needs to be made within Carroll's definition of 'closet feminists'. She classes women as closet feminists if they are attitudinal feminists, but not behavioural feminists. However this serves to obscure two distinct sub-groups. Women who make a conscious decision to eschew the label feminist although they perceive there to be a clear and close identification with the principles and goals of feminism must be differentiated from women who are unwilling or unable to see the congruence between their political beliefs and policy priorities and their perceptions of what feminism is. There also needs to be attention paid to a category of women who may not identify with or share feminist identifications - but may be behavioural feminists - in that, from time to time, for a variety of reasons they may promote women's interests.

Sara Ruddick offers an important insight when she qualifies her 'general and elastic definition' of feminism with two provisos : firstly that feminists must, whatever their other politics and interests, have a serious commitment to transforming gender relations; and secondly, that feminists must be 'partisans of women, fighting on their side.' (1989:234-235). Ruddick thus distinguishes between feminists and other women political activists. Her definition does not subsume women oriented women within feminism ; neither does it preclude women who are not feminists pursuing change; nor does it preclude shifting coalitions of women and feminists around specific issues.

Similarly, Skard and Haavio Mannila speak of three ways in which Scandinavian women politicians can be seen to stand for special women's interest. Firstly if they talk or write about a broad spectrum of issues, and explicitly or implicitly introduce a woman's perspective; secondly, if they make a contribution in traditional women's fields, for example, education and family policy; and thirdly, if they take up specific women's issues and directly promote the interests of women (1985:71).

The use of specifically feminist indicators may not be the most useful for predicting action. Women's politics, in a broader sense, can be viewed instead as including both feminists and non feminists and to be informed by a gender perspective which

may be radical, incremental or traditional. The context sensitive work of Chapman and others suggests that positive orientation and gender consciousness is conceptually more useful than feminist consciousness. It is to this work, that the chapter now turns.

Gender consciousness / orientation

Jenny Chapman constructs a typology for examining women's potentially distinctive impact which eschews overtly feminist indices but instead employs the subtler research focus of gender consciousness and positive orientation towards women. She stresses the need to construct typologies which do not 'exclude the possibility that someone may be politically useful or responsive to other women without being a conscious feminist and conversely that an ideologically feminist woman might have difficulty in relating her general aims to practical issues.' (1986:1).

Chapman (1987) uses three variables to construct a basic typology of women's political orientation:

- (1) A commitment to general political aims which would improve, defend or in any way alter the position of women vis a vis men
- (2) A commitment to specific issue-oriented goals which are intended to serve women's interests.
- (3) An ability to name sub groups of women with particular needs which require political action.

She distinguishes between two broad types of political orientation : Type A , who are politically conscious; and Type B, those with no commitment general or specific to women's interests and who see no relevance to women in their own political engagement.¹¹

Using this typology in her study of women candidates, she found that party was not a major factor in predicting consciousness; in fact, within both the Conservative and Labour parties, there was a marked polarisation between As and Bs. Although, less than 10% of Chapman's sample of women candidates included objectives in their

¹¹ Chapman (1987) uses a simplified version of her (1986) typology.

initial statement of main political aims, more than half (54.3%) were revealed during the course of her interviews to be Type A's. Around half the women had only general or only specific aims; and the other half reported both general and specific aims. When Chapman looked at younger women the proportion of Type A's rose to 81%. (1987: 327-328). Chapman found that women did not form a coherent group with well developed consciousness or a shared programme, there was ambivalence and division. However she concludes that:

Something more basic united them: a perspective which makes them conscious of women as a political category and relates women's interests to the political processes in which they are engaged. (1987:330).

The following analysis of the current study data also looks less at attitudes to abstract concepts of feminism, but instead focuses upon indicators of gender consciousness; in particular the willingness of women councillors to recognise the gendered dimension of politics and public policy, and their degree of support or commitment to promote policies of positive change for women. Adapting Chapman, each interview was analysed to assess degrees of women positive orientation. There were three stages: Did they mention or imply that they specifically represent women or groups of women?; Did they accept any of their aims had specific relevance to women, or groups of women; and thirdly could they identify groups of women who were in need of special help or political action ?

Some 49% of women made specific mention of representing women or groups of women; 51% identified a personal political aim of relevance to women, with a further 32% doing so with qualification. Finally at the most general level, 94% of women could identify sub-groups of women in the community who have special needs or are in need of some sort of political action or help. Thus, very high proportions of women councillors in this study display some level of political gender orientation: almost half see themselves as representing women; some 83% accept a gendered dimension to their political aims; almost all of them recognise groups of women. These proportions are considerably higher than the findings of Chapman's study, which may indicate higher orientations of the study population - or indeed may reflect increased understanding at a general, cultural level over the intervening decade (Chapman's study was carried out in 1984). This is an area which would benefit from further research and analysis.

Table 7 2 : Recognition of connection with women in the community

	Yes	Qualified Yes	No
Represents women	26 (49%)	-	27 (51%)
Has personal political aims relevant to women	27 (51%)	17 (32%)	9 (17%)
Can identify groups of women in need of political action	50 (94%)	-	3 (6%)

Women's Issues

Another means of assessing women politician's political orientation is in exploring their support for women's issues. Antolini (1984) argues that the way questions have been asked in various studies of women politicians has affected findings. Women politicians score higher ratings on concrete issues than they do when questions demand abstract descriptions of feminist orientation. Antolini concludes that her overview of American studies reveals significantly higher degrees of support by local women politicians than their male colleagues for feminist positions on salient political issues, and that women politicians attitudes are best determined by looking at specific issues (1984:33).

The definition of women's issues presents problems in the literature which parallel concerns expressed in the interviews. I draw upon Jónasdóttir's formulation of women's issues as defined through the value system of women's culture and which originate, ' from those interests or demands which the reproductive sphere poses against the productive sphere [...] from the fundamental levels in the family which all women in this society share - ie the *content* of their work in the family. In this sense a women's question is objective' (Jónasdóttir, 1988:42). Therefore women have objective interests arising from the content of their work in the family, these issues are then filtered through the differences between groups of women including social class, age and race. Jónasdóttir summarises four features which characterise a woman's issue:

- a) women support the issue to a greater degree than do men.

- b) the issue stands outside the traditional right-left scale.
- c) the issue tends to be met with emotional reactions in the political arena
- d) the issue lacks certified cultural authority or at least has an ambiguous political status (p.46).

The councillors in the current study were asked to discuss a number of aspects of women's issues. Attitudes to women's issues proved problematic to analyse quantitatively because of great problems of definition and highly contradictory personal stances. There was some resistance to the idea of 'women's issues' by both feminist and non feminist alike; nine women asserted there was 'no such thing' as a woman's issue. However the majority of interviewees discussions of women's issues covered areas such as childcare, women's health, violence, equal opportunities, part-time working and low pay. There was a level of shared meaning that women's issues arose out of their gender roles as they are currently constituted; in addition the issue of political representation featured strongly. Many women also introduced the idea of a women's perspective or angle across all policy areas which 'refocuses the agenda'. For example, the issues of childcare and work flexibility figure prominently in women's understandings of economic development. Several noted that women councillors, irrespective of their political standpoint, saw these issues as 'worthy of debate'.

Women's issues - the *what is* and *what ought* factors

The responses and discussion revealed a strategic tension, in many cases, between what might be characterised as 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. Several women stressed that so-called women's issues were, in reality, human or society's issues. However it was argued that men and male politics had paid scant attention to these concerns. Women's issues were also seen as transitional, with the emphasis upon incorporating issues within the mainstream political concerns.

They're issues that are presently ignored because of the vast majority of men in politics. But the things I see as women's issues at the moment I think, in the future, will be taken on board by everyone'. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Women were concerned that the label 'women's issues' could lead to the marginalisation or ghettoisation of concerns; conversely, there was a realistic assessment by many women that these issues could be lost in the 'mainstream'.

I think there's no such thing as women's issues. I think there are *people's* issues and it suits some men to just pack them off to the periphery and not really deal with them because it makes them uncomfortable; when, in actual fact, they should be stuffed right up their nose - because they're part and parcel of what we're all about as people in general. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Oh dear, I don't have a definition of women's issues. I can only tell you what most people's definition of women's issues is, that's obviously childraising, violence and careers. But I don't see those specifically as women's issues, they are general issues. Parents quite frequently are male and female, mainly they're male and female, and to me it just applies to the general population. Women's issues is a definition which is not mine, it's something I would very seldom use. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

Discomfort with the phrase 'women's issues' did not necessarily correlate with low ratings for the importance of specific issues. Conversely, some women who had little problem in using the term women's issues had little commitment towards them on their own political agendas. There was also an assessment by some women that the definition of certain issues as women's issues is divisive and also leads to 'backlash' from male colleagues. This was seen as both a strategic concern, but also was informed by the problems associated with particularism discussed in Section I.

I don't like the phrase women's issues, just the same as I don't like black issues, or gay issues, it's everyone's problem. I don't really like that because I don't think it gets you anywhere - well, that's what I've found anyway. As soon as you say that magic word *women* - that's it. So you've got to camouflage it, if you're wanting to do anything. (Labour, non feminist).

Several interviewees discussed the dilemmas. At one extreme, they argued were women who would have nothing to do with 'women's issues', they devalued the policy areas as 'soft' and concentrated on 'hard' economic issues,

They want to prove so much they are as capable as one of the guys, that they don't want to know about traditional women's lives. (Scottish National, qualified feminist).

There was criticism of such women, who were seen as 'denying almost they are women'. However interviewees were also reluctant to be sidelined, along with women's issues. They felt hamstrung by men's trivialisation of women and women's issues, when instead they sought to have women's traditional concerns incorporated into the mainstream.

They are sidelined and there's a great deal of, 'Och well, what do you expect of a bunch of women, they would suggest that.' [...] And I want the lives of women to be *part of the process*. (Scottish National, qualified feminist).

Even among those who do not recognise women's issues, there was a widespread understanding of the gender dimension to certain local authority policy areas like housing and transport. Whatever the reasoning and the standpoint in terms of the broader abstract issues, the outcome is the same - a recognition of and concern with the differential impact of policy on women.

I'm suspicious about calling issues women's issues [...] If there is a problem with housing it is a housing problem, it's not a women's problem - but women are often the most affected and they perhaps are the ones at home caring for young children in bad houses. Housing will always come up very high on a survey of women's expectations of council services, it will perhaps come lower in male surveys - but I think it is dangerous to classify [issues] too rigidly as women's issues. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Women's issues are anything that affects the lives of women, anything at all. In terms of the council: anything about service delivery to women; services that we don't provide for women; whatever [...] We get housing committee reports that supposedly say the affect of policy on women - and it'll say there will be no affect on services to women, and that is rubbish. If we're not going to pay for stair lighting any mair that affects women, or if we're going to demolish the towers then that's affects women because it's basically women who live there - so I don't suppose I even single it oot for thinking [...] It all has a consequence for women. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

The emerging discussion points to the possibility that women with different ideological perspectives share some core understandings about the gender differentiated impact of certain policy areas on women and possess a potential to work in alliance on political policy and gender sensitive service delivery.

I'm very much into women's issues as well but I'm not a radical feminist by any manner or means. I feel there are a lot of problems out there for women, ordinary women that are not being addressed (Labour, non feminist).

There were high degrees of interest and support in women's issues from both feminists and non-feminists. Interviewees were asked to assess the importance they placed on women's issues on their personal political agendas. Women who had discussed their reluctance to use the phrase women's issues were asked how they would rate issues which are frequently classed by others as women's issues: 32 women (62.7%) rated women's issues as important or very important, including eight women who did not term them as such; a further 12 women (23.5%) rated them as of some importance, including six women who did not use the term women's issues. Only seven women (13.7%) gave women's issues little or no

importance. Of these, all were aged 49 or more; three were aged 60 or more, the party breakdown was four Conservatives and three Liberal Democrats.¹²

Although discussions were frequently multi-layered and sometimes contradictory, a general pattern emerges that women perceive that women politicians in general place importance upon gender issues; that women were more sympathetic than men, although some younger male councillors - especially those who were active parents - were seen as concerned. In general Labour women were assessed as the most supportive sub-group of women, and Conservative men seen as the least supportive; although a small number of women thought the Labour party was highly polarised on gender issues and that Labour men were, 'more virulent than anybody else against them'.¹³

Men were perceived to be less concerned with these issues. They were characterised, to varying degrees, as indifferent or lacking in understanding.

I don't think a lot of them understand what we mean by that yet! But I think in principle some are quite willing to support the idea of women's issues and the development of them. I'm not sure that they're quite convinced of the impact that it has. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

There was also a perception from some women that male officers and male councillors did not take women's issues seriously and that some 'go out of their way' to trivialise and undermine women's initiatives. One woman argued that equal opportunities involving disabled or black and ethnic minority issues were seen at authority level as 'safe issues', whereas women's issues were seen as a threat.

When it comes to gender it's, 'Oh no, these radical women, they want to change the world and we'll have lesbians running the place!' It's much more of a threat. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Women councillors would appear to have supportive attitudes to a range of policy areas which affect women more than men: for instance childcare, nursery provision, community safety, community care, housing and transport policy, health, violence,

¹² There were two missing cases, a 56 year old Labour and a 63-yearold Scottish National . 51/53 discussed the importance of women's issues to their own political agenda : Very important/important: 24; Important (but don't term as women's issues) 8; Some importance,6; Some importance (but don't term as women's issues), 6; little/no importance, 7.

¹³ All 36 women , who discussed the question, assessed that women gave some importance to women's issues.

equal opportunities and greater political representation for women. Women across political party find the term 'women's issues' problematic for a number of reasons, in the main because they perceive these issues to be human or society issues rather than narrowly-defined women's issues. Both feminists and non feminists expressed unease at the use of 'women's issues', although they also recognised that without a label many of these concerns could be rendered invisible. Women also perceived themselves to be more committed to women's issues than men. This commitment ranges from a recognition of the complexity of the issues and their place on the political agenda to action. These findings are congruent with work done elsewhere. Kari Skrede (1992) suggests that women share a common agenda but issues are then filtered through class and political ideology. So, for example right-wing women will favour market-led solutions and left-wing women will favour collectivist or state solutions to commonly defined problems such as childcare (see also Skjeie, 1991). Barry's survey of London councillors found that local politicians generally recognised it was other female councillors who tended to give higher priority to issues specifically affecting women, but that replies were highly conditioned by party (1991:141-146).

Attitudes and Action - inhibiting and enabling factors

The general pattern emerging from the current study, and backed up by studies elsewhere, suggests that women have a potentially distinctive political agenda (Antolini, 1984; Hedlund, 1988; Carroll, 1992). Where studies have found both women and men support an issue - the *degree* of support differs, that is women tend to feel more strongly about issues of women's status than do their male colleagues. Although survey data must be viewed with caution, Antolini reports that, 'results suggest that (local women politicians) do operate within a gender-distinctive attitudinal framework that directs their policy decisions' (1984:37).

However, as Antolini notes, women and men may have different levels of agency to act on their political goals. There is some evidence that women politicians have, in some cases, had a gender distinctive impact upon policy. American political scientists Ellen Boneparth and Emily Soper have argued that the presence of women elected office holders, whether feminists or not, is one of the factors in the successful promotion of policies (1988:14). There is however counter evidence of women politicians who display little connection with women and do little to

promote equalities issues. This led Joni Lovenduski, in her overview of women in European politics, to observe:

The presence of women so far has not always guaranteed the taking into account of women's interests. The evidence is that many women politicians are surrogate men, and that they have no interest in pursuing women's rights, or questions of particular concern to their women electors (1986: 243).

The ambiguous findings suggests there is a *continuum* of gender consciousness and commitment which interacts with various inhibiting and enabling factors to result in different types and levels of action.

Antolini suggests three inter-connected factors which act to inhibit women, and which may operate to suppress gender distinctive behaviour or orientation: *realpolitik*, *institutional sexism* and *tokenism*. The operation of *realpolitik* together with *institutional sexism* creates a system whereby women who want to advance must play by male defined rules and identify with male-defined political goals. These inhibitors make it imprudent for women to be present *as women* in politics and thus potentially suppress any identification with issues which are seen as both marginal and, in some cases, subversive. Githens (1984) argues that the pressures to stay in the closet are such that attempts to evaluate women's performance on criteria such as feminist identification or public feminist platforms fail to take into account the structural pressures on women.

Together with these two factors can be added structural rigidities, particularly in the British system, which act to both exclude many aspirant women from gaining entry to elite politics at local and national level, and also to pressure women through party discipline to, 'eschew both separate association and the search for solidarity across party lines' (Chapman, 1987:318).

The third inhibitor suggested by Antolini and others is *tokenism*. This relates to the concepts of outgroups discussed by Kanter (1977) and marginality explored in Githens and Prestage's classic study, *The Political Marginality of Women* (1977). These works discuss the pressures that face women, as an outgroup, in organisations and political structures. Women, as other outgroups, face hegemonic assessments of themselves as 'other' and 'lesser'. This leads women politicians to

either disassociate themselves from other women and to embrace the (male) values, styles and goals of the system; or to accept a limited role within the system and to display what Vallance (1979) has called the 'conscientiousness of junior prefects'. These concepts are linked to wider notions of consciousness.

These factors have been discussed widely by the female councillors in the current study (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5). The discussion of backlash and the targeting of feminists in this chapter is also highly suggestive of institutional sexism acting to inhibit women from becoming too 'visible' or from pursuing alternative agendas. There is not scope within the thesis to fully analyse data gathered about female councillors experience of day to day gender relations within local councils. However it is worth noting that women councillors report what Stanley and Wise (1986) call 'everyday sexism' as endemic in local authorities. Most women were anxious to stress the support of some male colleagues and officers, and many were reluctant to 'name' behaviours, 'I'm not sure it's discrimination but...' However, a picture was built up from the interviews of structures still resistant and hostile to women; and individuals within those structures who trivialise, patronise, undermine and exclude; and verbally and sexually harass women. The potential impact of these experiences in creating solidarity amongst women is alluded to later in the discussion.

Three possible enabling factors which may allow for the development and expression of gender consciousness are examined in the remainder of this chapter. They are: separate sex experience, 'critical mass' and the impact of the creation of structural 'space' for women's politics at local level in the form of women's committees.

Women's groups and gender consciousness

All the women were asked if they had ever been a member of a single-sex social, political or cultural group. This follows Jenny Chapman's research which found a very strong relationship between membership of a women's group of any type, and a positive political orientation towards women. She demonstrated separate experience was a sufficient condition for female politicians to begin to politicise gender, that is to be able to identify women as a political category and sub-groups of women as being in need of political action. Furthermore she explored the

importance of separate group experience as a contributing factor in women's political activism on gender or equalities issues (Chapman 1986, 1987).

More than 70% of the councillors in the current study had been, or were, members of women's groups, ranging from the Women's Rural Institute to the Women's Environmental Network. The most significant cluster of membership was women's sections and other women-only structures within political parties, particularly the Labour Party. Only two women spoke explicitly about being members of feminist groups. One councillor spoke of the transformatory experience of organising with other miner's wives during the 1983/1984 Miner's Strike, although she did not class herself as a feminist.

We could never, never go back to way we had been before. We had made such inroads - just to be accepted by the miners union for instance; because at the start of the strike it was obvious, patently obvious, that they expected us to stay at home and make pots of tea and worry about the men. But that was not to be, we were out on the picket lines, we were marching, we were on the rallies - just as tough and strong as the men. And I think what sums it up more than anything was that lots of people said, 'It's great that you are standing behind your men'; and we said, 'Oh no, we're not standing behind them - we're standing *with* them.' And that was a great step forward. (Labour, non feminist).

Involvement with Labour and Trades Union women's groups appears also to have played a significant role in both promoting women's involvement in politics and in raising gender consciousness. In particular involvement with semi-formal Women's Forums and Women's Councils in two areas seems to have acted as a catalyst for increased political action and involvement with women's issues. In Aberdeen a forum which brought together party, trades union and community activists, women's groups and feminist academics operated in the early 1980s and had a significant impact - particularly in the creation of a Women's Committee and a women's agenda in local politics. Three out of the six Labour women currently serving on Aberdeen District council pinpointed the Women's Forum and the woman politician who founded it as the main reasons they entered elected politics. For one of them, Annie Steveley, the group had a significant effect upon her thinking about politics.

These early meetings were just Labour party members and indeed other people with that kind of interest coming together in a way that didn't fit into any of the traditional structures. And what was mainly debated really was, having accepting that there should be a women's committee, they spent an awful lot of time working out how to go about achieving that. And it wasn't easy, I can tell

you, there was a lot of resistance to it - and supporting each other a lot because of the resistance. It really was from listening to them that I realised they were articulating things that I had always felt but hadn't considered it was a political kind of thing. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

In Dundee, the Women's Council fulfilled a similar function in raising feminist issues and encouraging women to become active in a variety of politics in the 1980s and 1990s.

I went to a branch meeting - and that was a bit depressing. I thought, 'What's happening here? There's nae young folk.' Just these aulder folk who met - fair enough - but mair like a wee gathering. I thought, 'Oh no, this isn't for me'; but there was one woman in particular called Dot. She was a nice older woman - right political - and she convinced me to keep going and then she introduced me to the Women's Council - which is part of the Labour party but all women - and once I got in there I thought, 'This is mair me - there's mair politics' and I stuck with that. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Like Chapman, the study indicates that separate sex experience in social as well as political groups can impact upon gender consciousness. One older Labour councillor, pinpointed the beginning of her transition from 'compliant traditional mother and housewife' to feminist when she went out to work and also started an Open University degree. Until then, her social life had revolved around her children and family. She had also been involved in mixed-sex political structures as a Labour party activist. She recalls that it was not until she began socialising with women from work and discussing issues that she became aware of the inequalities in her life and in women's lives more generally.

Seeing what the big, wide world was like out there. Although I'd been very involved in politics - doing that and going away to Labour conferences, [it was only then that] I began to see the kind of life I had been leading myself. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Personal experience, in particular divorce and discrimination were also found to have a potential impact upon women's gender consciousness and orientation, especially when they had been discussed with other women. There was also evidence that women's informal friendship groups and support networks within authorities had sometimes acted to raise awareness, especially when female councillors, individually or collectively had to deal with sexist treatment. On one council, a group of women councillors discussed the problem together, forewarned new female members, and made a collective stand.

We've told them we don't want to be domineered, I think they're getting round to the fact now [...] but there's one or two very elderly still can't grasp the fact - they would like to see the women at home (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

In addition, several women spoke about becoming more focused or radicalised individually, and in some cases as a group, as a result of frustration and disillusionment over the women's representation issue; and more generally at the slow rate of change for women.

At the beginning we thought everything was changing and everything was going to be all right but now ten years later nothing has changed, things have got worse if anything[...] I have been interested since then in trying to improve the contribution of women in politics or extend the contribution but, as time has gone on, I'm now beginning to see it as more important, and more crucial. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

I think we've probably reached the same conclusions via different routes . I think for some it is a very direct result of what they have experienced and seen, and the feeling of frustration that for all the years that apparently things have been supposed to change [...] it always seems to be one step forward and several steps backwards. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

There was, however, ambivalence expressed by many women about women's groups. In addition, a number of women on principle had avoided them. These were, in the main, women who expressed the least motivation to act politically for women, although the findings in this study were not as conclusive as Chapman's. Codings relating to gender consciousness and political motivation were difficult in the face of nuanced and contradictory material. In addition, virtually all women had some gender awareness. However of those who had the weakest political gender orientation, about two thirds had never been members of single-sex groups. In comparison, 88% of women who had strong or very strong political gender orientation did have experience of single-sex groups. It would therefore appear from the initial findings of this study that Chapman's separatist hypothesis is relevant, although other factors including friendship groups and support networks on the council and indeed membership of equalities committees may be relevant.

Critical mass - from a small to a large minority

Given the mass of structural, cultural and institutional inhibitors which operate within politics it is unsurprising if women's presence does not necessarily equate with political action in women's interests. Evidence from Scandinavian countries strongly suggests that women politicians only begin to display markedly different

behaviour from male politicians when they reach a 'critical mass', that is, when they constitute a large enough group to begin to express group solidarity. Dahlerup terms this as the transition 'from a small to a large minority' (1988). This suggests that numerical presence may be a precondition for the development and expression of gender consciousness and agency.

The level of women's representation in Scotland at national level is poor compared to other European countries, although it is higher at local government level. In 1995 women were 17% of Regional and Islands councillors and 22% of District councillors.¹⁴ None of the four authorities examined in this study meet the 30-35% threshold most commonly argued to be the proportions at which women begin to form a critical mass within organisations (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988). The percentage of women councillors ranges from 12.5% to 27%.

However, with the partial exception of Strathclyde Regional Council, women are highly visible. In three of the four authorities women made up more than 22% of the ruling group.¹⁵ There were women leaders of both Edinburgh and Aberdeen District councils (Labour); and, after the 1994 Regional elections, a Scottish National Party woman councillor became civic head of Tayside council. In addition women led the Conservative group in Edinburgh and the Liberal Democrat group in Aberdeen, the official opposition parties in both cases. Women convened key committees such as Housing (Edinburgh) and Finance (Tayside, pre.1994).

Strathclyde, like Tayside, follows the pattern in Scotland where women's representation levels are poorer at regional than at district level. It is the largest Scottish regional authority, covering half the population of Scotland, and was one of the largest in Europe. Its representation levels were well below the Scottish average at 12.5% and its women have 'low visibility'. There have been no women convenors of full committees, but after 1994 the administration promoted all its Labour women councillors to junior positions (vice chairs of full committees, chairs and vice chairs of sub-committees and working groups).

¹⁴ Following elections preceding local government reorganisation in Scotland in 1996 women were 22.4% of councillors in the 'shadow' unitary authorities. Source: Scottish Local Government Information Unit, 1995

¹⁵ Edinburgh Labour group (27%); Aberdeen Labour group (22%); and *Tayside Labour group (22%)(* pre 1994 Regional elections)

Thus the case study authorities would not meet the criteria for 'critical mass' yet there are strong indicators of gender consciousness from women councillors and all four councils are, to some degree, pro-equality authorities.¹⁶ This suggests that a more complex process than the achievement of numerical 'threshold' operates and that other factors may be significant which enable smaller minorities of women to display positive political gender orientation.

Kelly (1992, 1995) suggests that the seniority of women politicians is an important factor at local government level. She argues that the presence of women councillors together with the presence of women officers, at middle management level or above, correlates with commitment and effective implementation of equalities initiatives. Thus, Kelly's work suggests that a combination of presence and influence in both the political and organisational streams of local government is necessary for the manifestation of change. In addition, women in the current study discussed a constellation of factors which had, in certain instances, created an opportunity to progress issues. These include leverage within political opportunity structures, the existence of individual agents of change, and temporary alliances with both women and men. Some of these factors are analysed further in the following chapter.

A related enabling factor at structural level may be the creation of 'space' for gender politics within British local authorities through the establishment of women's/equal opportunities committees.

¹⁶ All four authorities have been cited for equal opportunities good practice. See Breitenbach (1995a).

Space in the structure ?

Halford suggests that one of the ways in which the creation of women's and equal opportunities structures within councils has been important has been in flagging the legitimacy of gender within local politics (Halford, 1988). However in addition to *symbolic* significance, the existence of women's committees may be argued to relate to a crucial structural issue, that of creating and maintaining a *space* in the system for the development and operation of gender politics; and the raising of gender awareness.

In this section women's attitudes about and support/opposition towards women's and/or equal opportunities committees, equalities structures, will be analysed; as will their perceptions as to the existence and form of female political solidarity within party and across party and the importance, if any, of numbers.

Women's committees and similar initiatives have been a feature of local government since the early 1980s. Two main types of initiative exist, those created with the explicit aim of promoting the interests and welfare of women; and other initiatives created to promote the related issue of equality of opportunity for women and other disadvantaged groups, particularly in terms of employment. In practice however, most are a combination of the two types. The first full standing women's committee and women's unit was in Greater London Council in 1982. It was abolished in 1986, but in its short life distributed £30 million to various groups and projects, almost half of that money for childcare provision (Hunt, 1986).

The first Women's Committee in Scotland was set up by Stirling District Council in 1984. By 1995 there were 11 full women's and/or equal opportunities committees and four sub-committee /advisory group structures; eleven authorities have one or more specialist staff in post (Breitenbach, 1995a). More than half of all British local authorities have now devised policies which fall within the broad remit of equal opportunities, however a far smaller proportion have specific structures. In 1994 there were 32 full women's/equal opportunities committees which means that Scotland, with around 9% of the U.K. population, has around a third of all women's/equal opportunities initiatives (Kelly, 1995).

As elsewhere in Britain, women's and equal opportunities committees in Scotland have had a turbulent history marked by press campaigns of derision; hostility from other parties, notably the Conservatives; and entrenched resistance to change from politicians within their own ruling parties and from council officers. Few women's committees and units are adequately staffed or resourced, and most have had to struggle in marginalised positions. Several have not survived. In addition the structures have to operate within a deeply macho political and organisational culture. Many officers appointed to women's initiatives in the early days were 'outsiders' and found themselves floundering in the unfamiliar and unfriendly structures of local authority bureaucracy (Lieberman, 1989; Kelly, 1995).

The role of women in the creation of the committees has been crucial, both as activists within Labour party branches and as councillors. Lieberman notes that most women's committees in Scotland were created as a result of district party manifestos, rather than from impetus from within ruling Labour groups on councils. Committees have been created and imposed upon hostile ruling groups - which has created a doublebind for women working within them as members and as officers (Lieberman, 1989:250). Thus women councillors either individually or in small groups had to create and maintain committee structures in the teeth of entrenched opposition. They were highly exposed and, along with officers, were subjected to political and personal attack, sometimes over a prolonged period. In the current study, one veteran Labour politician, whose personal position is that women's committees are marginal to the 'real stuff' of politics, nevertheless observed:

I think they've highlighted the area of women, but it's been a painful process. I've seen some very good women actually give up politics because of what happened to them on the women's committee. (Labour)

The main body of research on women's committees has focused largely upon a description of the history of women's committees, factors in their creation and survival (for example: Goss, 1984; Button, 1984; Halford, 1988; Hunt, 1986; Lieberman, 1989); the modes of organisation and operation of women's committees and women's units, both within their local authority structures and within the community (for example: Halford, 1988, 1992; Riley, 1990; Edwards, 1989; Kettlesborough, 1988; Coote and Patullo, 1990; Lieberman, 1989); policy development (for example: Goss, 1984; Halford, 1988; Kettlesborough, 1988; Riley, 1990); issues of tokenism, marginalisation and co-option (for example:

Parker, 1983; Halford, 1988; Parkin, 1992); women's committees as models and experiments in participatory democracy (particularly Edwards, 1989, 1995). Most of the literature also discusses the political and organisational problems encountered by women's committees and women's units. Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall argue that local government women's committees were one of the key sites of sustained feminist practice in the 1980s (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993).

Research has tended to focus upon initiatives and upon officers within women's units, rather than the role and impact of female politicians. Less attention has also been paid to more diffuse issues, such as the question as to how helpful women's committees are in investigating the construction and operation of women's politics. However the very existence of women's committees, however successful or tokenistic, has a major symbolic significance in that it signals the recognition of gender as a legitimate part of local politics.

The identification of women's committees and *municipal feminism*, with the Labour party in general and the Urban Left in particular has led to a degree of knee-jerk party polarisation around the issue (Barry, 1991; Coote and Patullo, 1990). This was fuelled in the 1980s by the 'Loony Left' media campaigns directed against many Left councils, particularly the GLC (Coote and Pattullo, 1990: Chapter 15). For example, Conservative councillors on the GLC initially boycotted the Women's Committee (Hunt 1986). Barry (1991) noted that Conservative women councillors in Greater London were less supportive of women's committees than their male colleagues.

In 1989 Lieberman reported that the position of Conservative councillors in Scotland could generally be described as one of 'overwhelming hostility to the concept and existence of Women's Committees' (Lieberman, 1989:251). However evidence from the current study is more complex. Initial findings indicate high proportions of support for equal opportunities work among women councillors across party; there is also support, although in some cases highly qualified support, for the work of women's committees and other equalities structures with 28 (53%) of interviewees giving general support, and a further 15 (28%) giving support for a limited remit - more usually for equal opportunities work in a women's committee. Of the ten women (19%) who classified themselves as unsupportive - often strongly

- all gave exceptions, aspects of the committees work they supported. Few women wished to entirely abolish structures; critics, in the main, wished to down-grade full committees to sub-committees; or to re-name structures.

I don't mind the equal opportunities angle of the committee - I can live quite happily with that. If it was an equal opportunities committee, just straight, I would be perfectly happy with it. (Conservative, non feminist).

There has been protracted debate about whether there should be general equalities committees or specifically women's committees; and also as to the status of initiatives within organisational and political hierarchies. Within the study there were three full committees: one women's committee; one women's and equal opportunities committee and one equal opportunities committee. Of the four authorities studied, Strathclyde is the only authority without an equalities structure in terms of a full committee, having instead a group with advisory status, although there is a women's unit. All four authorities employ specialist staff.

In practice, all the structures cover similar areas, including general policy analysis, equal opportunities policy development; childcare; women's safety and violence against women; issues around women's health; women and training etc.; they also highlight the multiple discrimination of ethnic minority women, women with disabilities, and lesbians. Equal Opportunity committees extend this work to men in marginalised groups. The full committees also act as grant bodies awarding small grants to community groups. In general, Edinburgh women's committee is perceived to be the most powerful and effective, and Strathclyde's women's advisory group seen as the least. Women councillors in Strathclyde linked the issues of status and effectiveness of their equalities structure with both the low levels of women present in the authority and with the lack of senior women to 'champion' the structure. Many women councillors in Strathclyde supported the upgrading of the advisory group to (at least) a sub-committee.

Until such time as you have a woman fairly senior in the hierarchy of Strathclyde Region Labour group, it'll never have very much clout. (Labour, non feminist).

It gives out the wrong signals, it says: 'We-e-ell we're supporting you - but only to a point'. It says that this policy's no worth the paper it's written on. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

I think it is considered a bit of a nuisance (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

It would be ludicrous to suggest however that there is a wholehearted embrace of women's committees and gender politics by women politicians across political divide. There is unease and opposition from some women councillors across party.

I think it demeans women - because it has, rightly or wrongly, been perceived as reducing women's issues down to crèches, childcare, and gay and lesbian photography workshops [...] it's seen as focusing on that narrow, narrow field. (Labour, non feminist).

However criticism is often constructive and few women dismiss the structures out of hand. There is an acceptance, sometimes tacit, that gender is relevant to local politics and policy making. This recognition can take the form of proactive and reactive support (or lack of opposition); it can involve committed agents of change shaping agendas or involve women who object to women's committees but nevertheless support or promote aspects of change.

There are no clear cut patterns of support. As discussed in Section I many women object to what they see as 'special treatment' for women, although their support for specific work sometimes contradicted this stance. For example, one Conservative women discussed her dislike for giving grant aid to women's groups but gave her support for the council's anti - sexual harassment policy which was initiated through the committee. Other women, who were strict equal opportunity supporters nevertheless recognised that disadvantaged women were benefiting from the grant-aid. The concern with particularism, or unfairness to men - sometimes bordered on the absurd. One Liberal Democrat councillor complained about a late night women-only bus service which was being run to meet demands for women's safety because she did not think it was fair that men were not also allowed to travel on the bus.

There was a common understanding by many of the women on a pragmatic level about the need for 'space' in the system to 'highlight' women's concerns. Women's committees were seen as necessary in their work of 'picking up the issues that men let slide off the agenda'. Whether women viewed these specific issues as 'women's issues' or 'people's issues' there was some acceptance of the need to assess realistically the likely fate of many of these issues given the current priorities of male politicians. A senior Labour politician, who had not initially supported women's committees, argued that without the committee giving out grant aid, women's groups would be 'practically at the bottom of the pile '.

It is not the purpose of this section to analyse the ongoing debate about equal opportunities versus women's committees. However what is clear is that many women from varied viewpoints have given thought to the issues. What emerges is a recognition of the practical use of some form of structure. Strategically a number of women saw equal opportunities as a means of defusing the reactions to the label 'women's committee' in arguments closely paralleling the discussions around feminism, many women saw the existence of a structure more important than the name.

Women's committees make people nervous and they make Labour men and Conservative men nervous and therefore there is perhaps a tendency to be perhaps a little more strident than you otherwise would be to get a message across. (Conservative, self-defined feminist).

I think we've avoided a lot of flak by calling it by another name and taking on board other discriminations. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Meeting in the middle?

Evidence from this current study and elsewhere indicate that surviving women's and equal opportunities structures have, since the late 1980s and 1990s gradually built up a broader base of political support. This would suggest they may now be a more legitimate site for investigating the political priorities and style of women from all parties. More recently, there is evidence that support for women's committees, in whatever form, can survive an authority's change of political complexion. For example, Aberdeen which was the first women's committee to be abolished in 1986, re-emerged as an equal opportunities committee (Edwards, 1988); and in 1989 was re-formed as a women's and equal opportunities committee (Lieberman 1989).

Julia Edwards has suggested that as committees have matured, the initial knee-jerk reactions to them have mellowed. She flags a growing sense of ownership across party for some of the surviving structures and growing legitimacy, rooted in part by the community consultation upon which some committees have based their work. (See also, Riley, 1990; Kettlesborough, 1988).

Women's committees are intended to 'bring a women's perspective' to local politics and, as such, one of their main roles have been that of policy analyst. Women's committees, and particularly women's units which tend to be staffed by feminist

officers, have discussed and highlighted the impact of gender-blind policy and service provision on women. Involvement in this work has the potential to raise the consciousness of councillors. The educative or consciousness-raising function of women's committees is not investigated in any systematic sense in the literature. However this is a potentially vital function, not least for female politicians themselves. Edwards points to tentative evidence of group loyalty and consciousness-raising in that support for women's issues tends to increase as councillors involvement on women's committees increases, although she discusses the impact on male councillors in particular (Edwards 1988:48;1989:222).

Evidence is speculative in the current study, however the discussion by women councillors of their change in attitude towards their women's/equal opportunities committee is suggestive that it may, to some degree, have played an educative or consciousness-raising role. The majority of women were, or had been, members of their authorities' equalities structure (44 out of 53). One in three women said they had changed their minds about their women's or equalities committee over time, all becoming more positive. Sometimes this change was small, for example generally hostile councillors now pointing to instances or areas of their committee's work of which they did approve. Several women had now come to support a committee, but with a limited remit; others had become more generally supportive. Several women said their attitudes had changed significantly. One Conservative councillor described her initial reaction to women's committees:

Oh, I thought they were dreadful, and mostly because, particularly some of the ones in the South, did such stupid things - and they actively promoted lesbianism which is not the role of a women's committee. They promoted almost hate campaigns against men and they spent public money very foolishly, and I think they got the whole sort of women's movement an extremely bad name (Conservative, self-defined feminist).

She argued that as a result of a change in the agenda of the women's committees and the constructive input of Conservative women councillors it had evolved into a structure which politicians cross party could identify with and support.

Indeed all of the Conservative women, half the Scottish Nationals and a two-fifths of the Liberal Democrats in the current study had changed their opinions at least minimally. This growing consensus around equalities structures must be reviewed with caution however there were two strong indications in 1994 that they are now

based on a broader raft of support. Firstly, the Labour-created Equal Opportunities Committee survived the change of political control at Tayside Regional Council. The new SNP administration voted to retain the committee and the anti-violence public awareness initiative *Zero Tolerance* (which is discussed in detail in the following chapter.). Secondly, at Edinburgh District Council, the Conservative opposition group voted with the Labour group to retain the women's committee, having voted for its abolition every year for a decade. Also, for the first time since its creation in 1984 they allocated money in their 'shadow' budget to support the work of the committee. Christine Richard, Conservative spokesman (sic) on women said:

That is an important change in Conservative thinking, which is very welcome. But it has taken ten years and, in the course of that, I have changed my own view about the role of women's committees. I do think, if they are operated sensibly, that they make a good and necessary contribution to the equal opportunities argument. (Conservative).

At an individual level, Liberal Democrat Kate Dean discussed her change of stance since serving on Aberdeen's Women's and Equal Opportunities Committee:

At my first council meeting, there was a move to disband the women's and equal opportunities committee - at that stage I approved of disbanding. I felt it demeaned women to treat them as a minority. However now would *not* wish it to be disbanded because it does a worthwhile job. (Liberal Democrat).

She said that although her dislike of labelling issues 'women's issues' remained, having served on the committee she saw the advantages of having a structure with a remit and a specific budget to deal with issues that would 'otherwise be overlooked'.

Catherine Lyon a Conservative councillor in Strathclyde until 1994, discussed her change of attitude about the women's advisory group in the light of initiatives like women's health policies and the *Zero Tolerance* campaign. She had, on principle, refused to sit on the advisory group:

I suppose it was a 'knee jerk' reaction initially in my group, in more recent days I have thought that I might have made a mistake there - it might have been interesting to be on it. (Conservative).

Labour councillor Sheila Gilmore believes that Edinburgh District Council's women's committee has had both an educative and a consciousness raising function,

and that a strong consensus has emerged across party on several issues, including the *Zero Tolerance* campaign.

That's why we were so keen to have a women's committee in the first place - not necessarily because the women's committee would itself do all sorts of wonderful things, but because of the impact it would have [...] as a catalyst.

She suggests that women across party have become radicalised to a degree by having the time and space to discuss gender issues.

I think those who come onto it, even those who come on to it fairly sceptical, are sometimes won over to some of the ideas. Beneath the political posturing I see that even some of the Conservative women have been influenced by it because they experience, I am quite sure, similar attitudes and discrimination in their own party. They might not admit it to us, but I think they do. (Labour).

Women perceived that female councillors were more supportive of equalities structures than male politicians in general; again generation was seen as significant in a number of cases for male support. The majority of women councillors believed that their structure had had a positive impact, however almost half wanted to see some change to the structure in their authority. This was, in the main, the wish to change the name of a committee, but the numbers also reflect a number of Labour women in Strathclyde who wanted their group upgraded, and a smaller number of women who wanted their committee downgraded.

Women's committees are not women-only, in one of the case study authorities the Equal Opportunities committee was convened for a time by a pro-equality male councillor. However, women generally play a leading role in the leadership and membership of these committees. As politicians and officers they shape agendas and define issues. There are perceptions that committees and the 'femocrats' who service them have had an educative and consciousness-raising function, and indeed there is evidence that women councillors have changed their attitudes, although it is impossible to assess how closely membership and growing gender identification are correlated.

I think [...] I've changed and certainly since I've been on the council and associated with the women's unit - it's had a tremendous affect on me. (Labour)

I was asked to join [...] because I was a woman, basically. I must admit my first reaction was, I wouldn't touch it with a barge pole - I'm being completely frank with you however since I became involved, I *am* interested [...] and I think it is important that we should highlight what happens to women in certain

situations and make men aware that it's not something that's going to be swept under the carpet. (Liberal Democrat).

Conclusions from the findings of the current study must be cautious, there is certainly not a case for arguing that women councillors give wholehearted support for women's committees nor that there is a consensus about goals and programmes. However, it appears that there is a recognition amongst women politicians that women's committees and equalities structures do provide an important space within local government for the development and expression of women's concerns. There appears to have been movement at individual and party level towards a growing acceptance and broad support for equalities structures. This evidence suggests a greater sense of the acceptance of gender/equalities structures as legitimate across parties within local government than has generally been argued. However there is unease at overtly gendered politics and the label 'women's committee' continues to cause great difficulty for many women politicians suggesting that consensus is more certain with an 'equal opportunities' label, particularly for parties other than Labour.

Magic numbers, solidarities and alliances

The interviewees were asked a number of questions to explore their perceptions of the relationship between 'critical mass' and gender consciousness. On a general level, they were asked whether they thought more women in politics would make a difference through numbers alone, or whether they would have to be 'the right kind' of woman. The idea of female solidarity was also explored through discussions about any concrete experience women had of working together, either within party groups or across groups.

Around two-thirds of the women directly discussed the issue of numbers versus the 'right kind'. Interestingly, several women interpreted the question as a discussion of merit rather than positive political orientation towards women. However 15 out of the 37 respondents believed that numbers alone would make a difference in politics.

I suspect numbers actually would make a difference on their own - thinking back to what we were saying about whether people become more radicalised I think actually they possibly do, even women who would probably say the usual 'I'm not a feminist...and I didn't come into politics for that'. (Labour)

Three women thought that the kind of woman was more important than an increase in numbers. Eleven women suggested that a combination of an increase in numbers and the right type of woman was needed to make a distinctive impact. Eight women thought the question was irrelevant.

Numbers are important in that it is easier the more people you have got supporting you, but it's not sheer numbers because as we've already said there are a number of women who don't necessarily support women's issues or women's representation - in fact they do more harm than good in some ways! Particularly if they are vocal in their opposition - so I think it probably does have to be women who are sympathetic. (Labour).

In the long-term you need to be able to have women across the board..of every shape, size, political direction, competence, laziness, efficiency - the lot , that's equality [...] But the problem is the short term - which is that if you start getting in women who don't want to change the system, who are quite happy to play the game as it stands you'll never reach the long-term. (Labour)

Women were asked whether they had concrete experience of working together with other women, within party groups or across party groups, to shape or promote a policy which was beneficial to women; or conversely to block or amend a policy which had a potentially detrimental impact. This question was of more relevance to councillors in ruling groups, mostly Labour. Women reported that they had worked together on a range of issues and areas of policy including: housing policy for victims of domestic violence; anti-violence campaigns; community safety; child care, including the establishment of a workplace nursery; women's health initiatives; the funding of a refuge for black women; part-time working/job share schemes for council employees; and anti sexual harassment codes.

Women come together to raise an issue and force it onto the agenda. (Labour).

Women assessed that they more frequently worked together within party groups, sometimes in alliance with sympathetic male colleagues. Very occasionally, they worked across party lines. One Conservative suggested that nursery education, women's health issues, violence against women and possibly equal pay campaigns were the potential bases of solidarity across gender rather than party lines.

I think, in general terms, issues which hinge on natural justice, you get women working together rather more than in any other field across the party political spectrum. (Conservative).

Some Labour women saw themselves as making potential alliances with Liberal Democrat women and possibly Scottish National Party women, but were suspicious about any potential for solidarity with Conservative women.

In my opinion the way that you view things is political whether it is with a big P or a small p. Women in the Tory group here will view things very differently than the way I view things. Just as an instance, we have a Christmas crèche here every year in Edinburgh, and every year we have a row. The Tories oppose it every year [...] what they're actually not realising is that these women don't have the money to pay for childminders or nannies or whatever. It's the lack of understanding, either that or they just don't feel that's the way we should spend our money. I very much feel it's not all women. (Labour).

However, even those women who would not entertain cross-party alliances on other issues were clear that violence against women was an issue where gender was more important than class or party difference.

There is one issue that I would say probably does affect all women - the issue of domestic violence, I don't think that is class-related. (Labour).

Many women cited the *Zero Tolerance* campaign as an example of women working together across party lines. This issue will be explored in more detail in the following chapter which traces the all-party support for the *Zero Tolerance* campaign.

Few women councillors in the study could be characterised as Queen Bees, although interviewees did discuss their experience of such female politicians. However Antolini's alternative of 'Sister', seems to stretch the analogy too far. Most women do feel at least a weak connection with other women politicians, to women candidates and to women in the community but in most cases it falls far short of sisterhood. In any event the relevance of the 'type' and its equivalent in the early days of Second Wave feminism has been eroded by the recognition of diversity amongst women. In politics women are divided by many things, not least political party and ideology. Party remains an important, if not the primary, political identification for most women councillors, although there were divided loyalties especially around the issue of representation. The *proximity* of women to each other in local government, and their common experiences as women in the machine, appears to lead to greater political gender orientation. This is backed up by findings in other studies. For example, Janet Flammang's study of the female majority in Santa Clara County in the early 1980s. She comments:

Once elected to office, women's proximity to each other, coupled with media attention to their majorities, led to an increased female consciousness on their part. They recognised a connection to the women's movement, which had made it easier for them to be seen as legitimate candidates, and to which they felt an obligation regarding future women candidates. (Flammang, 1984:112).

I would suggest that women councillors in the study are neither Queen Bees nor Sisters but can be characterised instead, borrowing from a related discussion by Susan Mendus (1992), as neighbours. Neighbourliness retains room for differences and other loyalties, but captures a sense of process, whereby women sharing common experiences as women in politics, can develop a sense of solidarity and a capacity for action.

Conclusions

The construction of women politicians' political identity is complex, however the findings of the study indicate that in most cases gender plays a part. More than half of the women in the study identified to a degree with feminism, however few related to feminism in a simple or wholehearted way, or stood on a feminist platform. Most women, feminist and non feminist, perceived there to be a political 'cost' in identifying as feminist in local politics including negative stereotyping and the hostile reaction of male politicians.

Feminism also exists in a complicated relationship with notions of femininity and femaleness. The narratives of women councillors suggests that this tension translates into politics via notions of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and strategies. Many women expressed unease with what they perceived to be the extreme characteristics of feminist strategy in much the same way as they reject 'male' political tactics of confrontation.

Equal opportunities, once synonymous with feminism, appears to have become partially 'uncoupled' as it has become perceived as a mainstream issue or ethos. Similarly, more women identified with the Women's Movement than they did with feminism. Women tended to perceive the women's movement as a loose and broadly inclusive collectivity which supported women in practical ways. It was also

seen as a diffuse cultural phenomenon. It may be that this inclusive definition is distinctive to Scotland. This point is further discussed in the following chapter.

Considerable difficulties exist around the use of feminism as an indicator for 'women's politics'. This chapter argues for context sensitive work using the more useful concepts of gender consciousness and positive political orientation. The findings suggest that there is a continuum of consciousness and commitment. At minimal levels, virtually all women in the study could identify personal political aims of relevance to women; and sub groups of women in the community in need of political action. In the main, there was a recognition that gender relations were to some degree politicised. This recognition could be abstract but more often revealed itself in connection with specific, concrete issues.

Most women emphasised that their main concern was that of representing all people, few women characterised themselves as primarily champions for women. Political party was a major source of identification for most women. However there were some 'divided loyalties'. There was a general perception that women councillors were more supportive of 'women's issues' than male councillors. There was also a willingness to recognise the connection between themselves and other women in the community.

The discussion in this chapter also indicates that there is a complex relationship between the development of gender consciousness and the space or opportunity to express it or act upon it. Several inhibitors to the development and expression of gender consciousness were discussed including realpolitik, institutional sexism, party rigidity and tokenism. There is not a simple or linear progression from consciousness to action. These inhibitors also operate to reduce women's agency to pursue gender-oriented political programmes or goals.

Conversely, several potential enabling factors were discussed which may allow gender consciousness to develop. Separate sex experience was found to have an important consciousness raising function for many women, whether in social groups or political party women's sections. There was also evidence that women's friendship groups within authorities acted both to raise consciousness and provide support. Personal experience, in particular divorce and discrimination, were also found to have a potential impact. The issue of women's political representation, and

disillusionment at the generally slow rate of change for women had galvanised some women into action.

There is a theoretical expectation, backed up by empirical studies, that once women reach a substantial minority or 'critical mass' within an organisation they are enabled to express group solidarity as women and can begin to promote positive change. None of the four authorities examined here meet the notional threshold of 30-35% women's representation. However all display some concrete signs that gender is seen as a legitimate part of local politics. This suggests that a more complex process than the achievement of numerical threshold operates and that a constellation of other factors, including the presence of individual agents of change, the presence of senior women politicians and middle-ranking female officers, political opportunity structures and leverage, may be significant in enabling smaller minorities of women to express and 'do' gender politics. It appears that the proximity of women to each other in local authorities and the shared experience of situations causes many women to critically reflect upon gender relations and politics; this can lead to increased gender consciousness, and also an increased sense of connection with regards to both other women in the community - and future women candidates.

A significant structural factor appears to be the creation and maintenance of space for gender politics within local authorities through women's and equal opportunities committees. Despite real tensions and difficulties, there has been a steady growth of women's and equal opportunities initiatives in Scotland which may be contrasted with the position in England and Wales where development has been more uneven (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993). In Scotland there is cautious optimism, women's committees are seen as having had a limited but marked impact as agents of change and, in the case of Edinburgh, as succeeding in challenging and changing the ethos of the authority (Breitenbach, 1995a; Kelly, 1995).

In the rest of Britain, pessimism about the gains and viability of women's initiatives has been expressed by some female politicians and commentators. Labour MP Margaret Hodge, former leader of the London Borough of Islington recently argued of women's committees, 'They were *brave* but maybe they were not right'.¹⁷

¹⁷ Margaret Hodge, speaking at the *Women and Local Government conference*, John Wheatley Centre, Edinburgh: January 24, 1995.

Similarly Lovenduski and Randall, whilst noting the importance of women's committees in creating a new class of 'professional feminists' or 'femocrats', comment that there are indicators that the immediate potential of women's committees has been exhausted, and that they can expect their future to consist of 'straightforward equal opportunities work for local councils and in servicing local women's groups'. They do however acknowledge that the situation in Scotland appears to be different (1993: 151-154)

It appears that women's committees have served the function of raising the consciousness of both women and men, and have promoted women's agency to act, albeit on a limited budget. There may also be a distinctive political context to the development and operation of women's politics in Scotland shaped to a degree by the high level of networking between women's groups, partly as a result of geographical size and partly as a result of the activism and collaborative work of a wide range of women's groups around the issue of constitutional reform and gender equality of representation in a Scottish parliament. In the following chapter these themes of presence and agency will be further explored through a specific case study, the genesis and development of a radical anti-violence public education campaign, *Zero Tolerance*.

7 **The *Zero Tolerance* campaign : a case study of women's politics in action?**

Zero Tolerance came from actually asking women: 'What concerns you?'
We never dreamt, of course, that it was going to take off as it did.

Councillor Margaret McGregor,
Convenor, Edinburgh District Council's Women's Committee (1994)

Husband, Father, Stranger : Male Abuse of Power is a Crime.

Zero Tolerance Campaign (1994)

Introduction:

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is a groundbreaking public awareness initiative which challenges social attitudes and myths surrounding violence against women and children. It originated with Edinburgh District Council's women's committee in 1992 and was launched with broad political, civic and church backing. By March 1995 the campaign had been taken up by eleven other Scottish councils, by the Association of London Authorities, seven other English councils and had also been launched in South Australia.¹ The campaign has succeeded in generating high levels of public debate and has pushed the issue of violence and sexual violence higher up the political agenda. It has been marked by success in terms of not only public response, but also uptake from other authorities and support from a wide range of agencies and women's groups. The success of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign has been on a scale beyond the expectations and experience of local government women's committees in general. In addition, despite being a radical campaign on a classic 'feminist issue' it was received with broad political, civic and public support and there is evidence that it has galvanised local communities and women's groups in Scotland.

As a case study, the *Zero Tolerance* campaign is an ideal site to explore key questions about the presence and influence of women in the local state. In particular it allows examination of two conceptually distinct, but inter-related, questions: firstly, what impact have women *qua women* had in local decision-making arenas;

¹ Source: EDC Women's Unit, March 1995

and secondly, what is the impact of *feminist* interventions in the local state. The *Zero Tolerance* case study explores the significance of the presence of women in the local state as elected members and as officers. It provides important insights into the scope and impact of feminist interventions in the local state, particularly the significance of women's / equal opportunities committees as vehicles for change; and the individual and collective agency of women politicians. The case study casts light upon the processes of agenda setting and the construction of legitimacy for gender issues within local government; it traces patterns of support for the campaign and the campaign's salience to women politicians; and suggests there may be common concerns - and the potential for solidarity - between women politicians, feminist and non feminist, across party.

The case study also traces the sufficient conditions under which women politicians may start to demonstrate political orientations towards women; and where they may act, individually or collectively, to promote or support positive change. It explores the impact of collective political behaviour by women qua women in terms of determining the successful implementation of gendered policy; building upon the discussion of enabling and inhibiting factors in Chapter 7.

Women are present in the state as both political and organisational actors and therefore this chapter widens the focus to include some council officers, particularly women's and equalities officers, in addition to women politicians.² It also takes note of the relationship between women within and outwith the state: women in the community, women's groups and feminist groups; although within the scope of this thesis these important dynamics cannot be fully examined. Furthermore it considers the view that, in the Scottish context, there has been a convergence between the agendas of women's movement activists in Scotland and those of women working in local authorities as councillors and officers, a convergence that has been facilitated by a general diffusion of feminist values and by the mobilisation and networking of women around issues of gender equality in a Scottish Parliament.

There are several other ways in which the *Zero Tolerance* campaign could be fruitfully analysed. For example, as a case study of the policy making process upon feminist issues, it would add to the body of feminist policy making research. Feminist policy research has suggested that the formulation and promotion of

² For a discussion of the methods, see Chapter 1.

policies which challenge existing social and political power relations are most likely to meet with resistance and 'backlash' (Gelb and Palley, 1982; Boneparth and Soper, 1988). Thus radical policies in general and feminist policies in particular encounter both general and gendered resistance. Feminists engaging with the state from within and outwith have found issues have been distorted or diluted resulting in what Joyce Outshoorn has described as the 'creeping process of issue modification' (1991). Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall point out, as do others, that feminists have tended to lose control of definitions because policy makers and administrators inevitably muted the impact of radically conceived reforms. This has resulted in limited outcomes in terms of social change (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Stedward, 1987). However, whereas feminists and other 'outsider' or 'thresholder' groups have in general found that involvement with the state, or the policy making community, has resulted in the dilution or modification of their concerns, in the instance of *Zero Tolerance*, the local state has proactively promoted a radical definition of the issue of violence against women which has been formulated by the women's movement itself. This is an important aspect of *Zero Tolerance* and is in need of further research.

Another alternative focus would be to analyse *Zero Tolerance* from the perspective of feminist state theory. Feminists have always faced the dilemma of how to gain and use power to transform society without sacrificing feminist principles and processes. Feminist values of non-hierarchical, collective and democratic processes are antithetical to the workings of state bureaucracies. However many of the demands of the contemporary women's movement can only be met through the state. There is a body of work on feminist interventions in the state, notably the Australian work on 'femocrats' - professional feminists working within state bureaucracies at national and local state levels (Franzway et al., 1989; Eisenstein, 1991; Watson, 1990). Work in Britain has tended to focus upon feminist interventions from outwith the state, for example the impact of feminist campaigns in areas such as legal reform of rape laws (Brown, Burman and Jamieson, 1993; Smart, 1989); or the interaction between feminist groups and the state (Stedward, 1987; Dunhill, 1989). Studies of local government women's committees have tended to view women's units as organisational entities, and have seldom explored the inter relationship between various political and organisational actors, including the role of women politicians.³

³ The work of Ellen Kelly (1992, 1995) is a significant exception to this trend.

Writers such as Halford (1992); Watson (1990,1992); Eisenstein (1991); and Franzway et al. (1989) have argued that dominant views of the state as a unitary or crudely functional tool of capitalism or patriarchy, at either national or local level, should be rejected and replaced with exploratory new models, which integrate understandings of the state as shaped by specific social struggles. These struggles have resulted in the institutionalisation of male power; but that the state continues to be shaped by contemporary complexes of relations, which allow for the possibility of change. The state is thus a contested terrain, a set of social and gender relations where there is space for change through feminist intervention. Watson (1992) and Halford (1992) argue that new, more sophisticated, feminist theories of the state need to be developed in order to not only analyse feminist interventions but also inform future feminist strategy.

However, pressing though the need is for further development of feminist theories of the state, this thesis is positioned tangentially to such an approach. Its primary focus is the perspective of women councillors in local political decision-making bodies. As such, within the case study of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign, it is the *relationship* between feminist interventions in the state and manifestations of broader, more diffuse *women's politics* which is of central concern. Femocratic interventions, particularly at structural level, are examined in terms of their relevance in producing the space and environment in which issues may be developed and which may facilitate the emergence of gender oriented political behaviour on an individual and collective basis (see also Chapter 7).

This chapter seeks to use the context of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign to further examine key questions already raised in the thesis about the role and impact of women politicians. The primary focus remains with them and their involvement with, and attitudes towards, issues of violence against women and *Zero Tolerance*.

Before documenting the genesis and development of the campaign, the chapter will firstly, briefly outline the historical profile of violence as a feminist issue and position the *Zero Tolerance* campaign within the tradition of feminist politics. After outlining the first phase of the original campaign, the chapter will then move on to examine some of the enabling contexts which may account for the campaign's success: the strength of women's and equal opportunities structures in Scottish local

government, and the Edinburgh context in particular; the networking amongst women's groups; the broad salience of the issue of violence, The chapter will then consider two specific factors: the initial management of the Edinburgh campaign; and the role of women politicians in supporting the campaign in all four authorities.

Violence as a feminist issue : breaking the silence

The purpose of feminist activism on sexual violence began with the necessity of making the private pain and shame of women public, a collective refusal to keep men's secrets and from this beginning has grown a multitude of activities, many of which are still directed at removing the legacy of centuries of permission. (Kelly et al.1994).

The true scale of violence against women and children is unknown; rape, sexual assault and domestic violence are believed to be massively under-reported. For example, researchers Rebecca Dobash and Russell Dobash estimate that only 2% of domestic violence is reported to the police (1992). Monica McWilliams and Joan McKiernan (1993) note evidence which suggests that violence against women in the home occurs in between 10 per cent and 25 per cent of all relationships. Lorna Smith in a Home Office review of domestic violence studies discusses the problem of assessing the extent of violence against women which is, by its nature, hidden, minimised and ignored. The limitations to both information drawn from general population surveys and data extrapolated from small-scale studies mean that 'there is simply no reliable estimate' of the extent of domestic violence. Nevertheless, notwithstanding all the problems involved, Smith argues that the inescapable conclusion of all the evidence is that 'domestic violence constitutes a pervasive problem' (Smith, 1989:14).

There are several key features to the problem of violence: men are predominantly the perpetrators of violence and sexual assault; and women and children are predominantly its victims; statistically, women and children are more at risk in their homes from men they know, than out of doors from strangers.

The issue of violence against women has been the focus of social and political campaigning by feminists in the second wave of 20th century women's movement

from the 1970s onwards.⁴The seventh and final demand of the Women's Liberation Movement was:

Freedom for all women from violence, or the threat of violence, and sexual coercion, regardless of marital status, and an end to all laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women.

Feminists have also been instrumental in raising the issue of child sexual abuse from the mid 1980s and in linking differing forms of violence against women and children. Feminist anti-violence campaigns have involved political mobilisation around issues of protection and prevention; and feminist groups such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis have also been at the forefront of provision of practical help in the form of refuges for women escaping violence, crisis help-lines and long-term support and counselling for survivors of violence and sexual assault.

Linda Gordon (1988) has documented an awareness of issues around violence for women's rights activists from the 19th Century onwards. She argues that for more than a century it has been the feminist movement that has been most influential in 'confronting, publicising and demanding action against family violence'. She argues that family violence has risen and fallen from political agendas and public consciousness in line with levels of feminist activity.

Concern grew when feminism was strong and ebbed when feminism was weak. Women's movements have consistently been concerned with violence not only against women but also against children.(Gordon, 1988:4)

Explanations of violence are varied but have traditionally fallen within two headings: those which concentrate on the *individual pathology* of the victim or perpetrator, that is that either the victim or the perpetrator- or both - is 'mad' or 'bad'; and *social structural explanations* which explain violence in terms of reaction to social structural factors, for example stress caused by poor housing or unemployment. The major distinctive feature of a *feminist analysis* of violence is that it explains the phenomenon as an issue of power and the result of the unequal

⁴ For an overview of the refuge movement see Lovenduski and Randall (1993); see also Hanmer et al (1989)Pahl (1985) Dobash and Dobash (1992).

status of women and men in society. Thus violence is framed within a political context rather than as a private problem or a social welfare issue.

Feminist service delivery, that is the services provided by the refuge movement, rape crisis groups and other women's support groups, has also been distinctive. A key part of feminist service provision has been the emphasis upon the empowerment of women. Women seeking help are seen as 'survivors' rather than 'victims' and practical help is underpinned by the belief that women can be agents of change in their own lives. This philosophy of self-help has resulted in tension between organisations such as Women's Aid and welfare professionals who intervene as 'experts' (Smith, 1989; McWilliams and McKiernan, 1993; Lovenduski and Randall, 1993).

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign can be seen as distinctive and an exception to local authority politics for several reasons. It is a radical initiative in that it seeks to challenge existing power relations and effect far-reaching social change. The campaign challenges *all* men to acknowledge male violence, and individual men to take responsibility for their violence. In addition, it is an explicitly feminist campaign in a number of ways. Firstly, it shares a feminist perspective in its 'naming' of violence as a political issue. Secondly, it uses a feminist analysis of violence as a male abuse of power and it links sexual violence, domestic violence and child sexual abuse as part of what feminists have identified as the 'continuum of violence' (Kelly, 1988). It also defines emotional and psychological abuse as forms of violence. Thirdly, it specifically uses empowering images of women - rather than 'victim' imagery. This builds upon the women's movement philosophy of self-help and personal empowerment. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign - although it comes out of local government - can thus be positioned as an initiative based upon and informed by twenty years of groundwork by the women's movement.

The genesis of the *Zero Tolerance* Campaign

In December 1992, Edinburgh District Council (EDC) Women's Committee launched a high profile, groundbreaking campaign aimed at raising public awareness about the nature and extent of violence against women. It was based, in part, on a Canadian government national anti-violence programme which was

launched in response to the death of fourteen young women in the 'Montreal Massacre'.⁵

The EDC campaign sought to 'name' the problem of violence against women, to challenge men to take responsibility for their actions and to work towards the 'zero tolerance' of violence against women. The campaign was built around the idea of 'The Three Ps' : Prevention; Provision and Protection. Its stated long term objectives were to generate public debate and focus on strategies to *prevent* crimes of violence against women; to highlight the need for the *provision* of adequate support services; to highlight the need for appropriate legal *protection* for women and children victims/survivors of violence.

In the shorter term, the campaign sought to highlight the prevalence of various crimes of violence against women and children, linking these crimes as part of a continuum of male abuse of power; to promote a criminalisation strategy and send out a clear message that these forms of violence should not be tolerated; and to debunk some of the myths around these crimes. In particular the campaign sought to challenge commonplace perceptions that violence is solely a working class problem, that women and children are most at risk from strangers, and that sexual violence or violence only happens to certain women because of their age, their appearance, dress or behaviour. These ideas and insights have been well-known for many years within the women's movement, but the messages were less familiar to the wider public, including many local government politicians and officers. Indeed campaigners have clearly acknowledged the pioneering work of the women's movement and have positioned the campaign within the feminist tradition.

Researchers into violence Rebecca Dobash and Russell Dobash (1992) have highlighted the importance of work that challenges public and media perceptions of violence and the institutional arrangements built upon prejudice and ignorance. The

⁵ On December 6, 1989, fourteen young female engineering students were murdered in Montreal, Canada by a young man who wanted to kill 'those damned feminists'. The 'Montreal Massacre' was the catalyst which spurred the Canadian Federal Government into taking action to end violence against women. On February 10, 1991, the Government announced a four-year Family Violence Initiative with funding of 136 million dollars which was implemented from January 1993. It builds upon provincial, municipal and grassroots initiatives, notably in Ontario, where work has been carried out since 1983. Briefing paper, 'Canadian Initiatives on Violence Against Women', *Making Z-Way: Ayrshire Zero Tolerance Conference*, March 6, 1995

Zero Tolerance campaign has been one of the most significant and successful recent developments in this field.

The campaign was developed in response to two pieces of research commissioned by Edinburgh District Council's women's committee. Firstly, local women involved in a major consultation exercise carried out in 1990 identified violence against women and women's safety as among their main concerns.⁶ And secondly, a survey of secondary school pupils to examine adolescents' attitudes about violence against women revealed disturbingly high levels of acceptance of, and misconceptions about, domestic violence. It found that boys, some as young as twelve, were more accepting of violence towards women than girls. Both girls and boys found violence more acceptable if the victim was married to the abuser. The majority of boys and girls reported that they expected violence to feature in their personal relationships in the future. One positive finding was that exposure to information about violence against women appeared to influence attitudes and make it less acceptable (Falchikov, 1992).

In response to these findings, EDC women's committee agreed to fund a six month public awareness campaign around issues of violence against women and children. The campaign was produced in-house by women's officers who brought in freelance feminist designer and photographer, Franki Raffles. The campaign team argued that very little work had been done in terms of challenging social attitudes about violence or in challenging male perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions. The main focus of previous initiatives had been to provide personal safety strategies for women to avoid attacks by strangers which reinforced the myths that women and children are most risk from strangers and that women are themselves somehow responsible for preventing or avoiding violence. One of the creators of *Zero Tolerance* said:

There was stuff going out about violence from the Scottish Office and the Region [Lothian R.C] but it was putting the responsibility onto women - to avoid places, to hide their femaleness, if you like. I can remember one set of guidelines which advised women if they broke down in their car to try not to look like a woman! We didn't feel the way violence was being discussed was

⁶ B. Stevenson, *Women's Consultation Exercise*, Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee, 1990. The women's unit's regular three-yearly consultation exercise with local women. The 1990 exercise identified violence / safety as one of the main issues of concern along with childcare and access to training and employment.

helpful. *Zero Tolerance* wanted to name the problem - which of course wasn't a new message in the women's movement - but we wanted to make it much more public - to reach a wider public.⁷

The initial phase of the campaign, which ran from December 1992 to May 1993, consisted of posters challenging stereotypical views of different aspects of violence such as domestic violence, child sexual abuse and sexual assault. It was devised in consultation with local women's aid and rape crisis groups and MOSAC, a self-support group for mothers of sexually abused children. The campaign used powerful positive black and white photographic images of women of all ages in cosy domestic situations alongside information about the nature and prevalence of domestic and sexual violence. The purposes of this strategy were two-fold: firstly, a decision to portray women as 'survivors' rather than 'victims' and thus be a resource of support for women to draw upon; secondly, to underline the hidden nature of abuse by juxtaposing comfortable images with uncomfortable messages in the text. The use of middle class imagery was designed to challenge common myths that domestic violence and sexual abuse only happen in certain social classes or sections of the community and that it does not happen to women and children from 'normal' families.

The initial campaign consisted of four posters. The first dealt with child sex abuse, it portrayed two girls playing with the text: *'By the time they reach eighteen, one of them will have been subjected to sexual abuse.. From Flashing to Rape : Male Abuse of Power is a Crime'*. The second poster dealt with domestic violence and portrayed a woman in tranquil domestic scene with the text: *'She lives with a successful businessman, loving father and respected member of the community. Last week he hospitalised her. Emotional, Physical, Sexual : Male abuse of power is a crime.'* The third dealt with rape, the poster showed a small girl and her grandmother reading a bedtime story, the accompanying text was: *'From three to ninety three, women are raped. Husband, Father, Stranger : Male Abuse of Power is a Crime'*. The fourth poster was all text, and read: *'No Man Has The Right'* with a large 'Z' - the logo for *Zero Tolerance* (See figures 8.1-8.4 on the following pages).

The posters were displayed on billboards and Ad shell display sites throughout the city as well as in indoor sites such as public houses, libraries, police stations,

⁷ Evelyn Gillan, interview with author 26.6.95

community and recreation centres. Subsequently, posters were displayed on the large prominent tripods which line Edinburgh's main shopping area, Princes Street, with statements such as '*No Man Has The Right*' and '*Male Abuse of Power is a Crime*' as well as statistics about the prevalence of violence against women.

A fifth poster about date rape was launched in 1994 which showed three young women chatting and the text: '*When they say no, they mean no. Some men don't listen. Whoever, Wherever, Whenever - Male Abuse of Power in a Crime*'. In addition a general campaign leaflet and *Zero Tolerance* bookmarks were distributed through libraries and other recreational outlets. Postcard packs describing the campaign were sent out to those requesting further information. People were encouraged to sign 'pledges' of their zero tolerance of violence against women and children and were urged to lobby local and national governments tackle the issue.

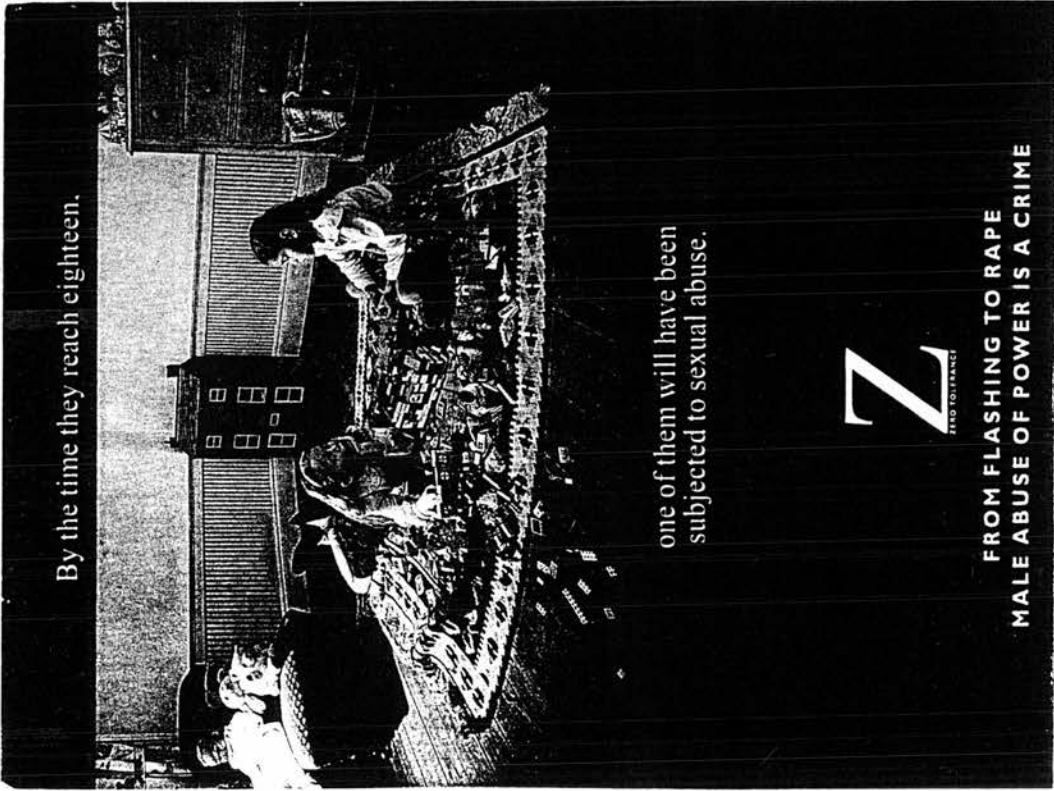


fig.8.1

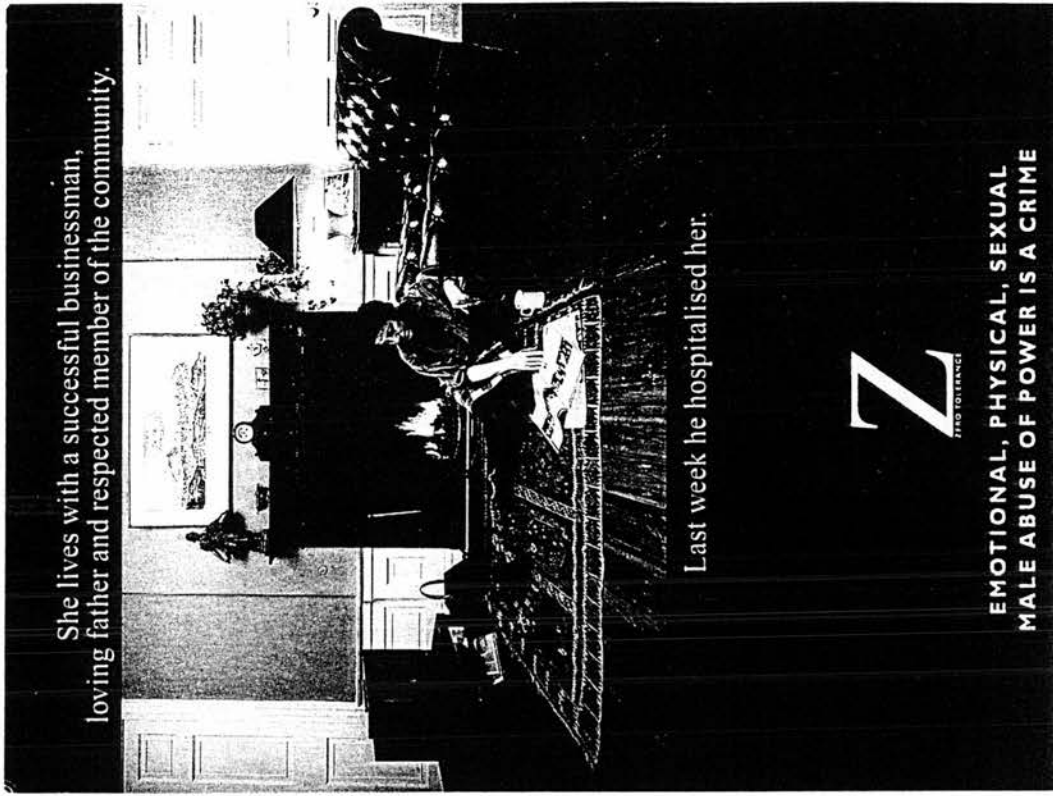


fig.8.2

Visuals from the Zero Tolerance Campaign : First Phase

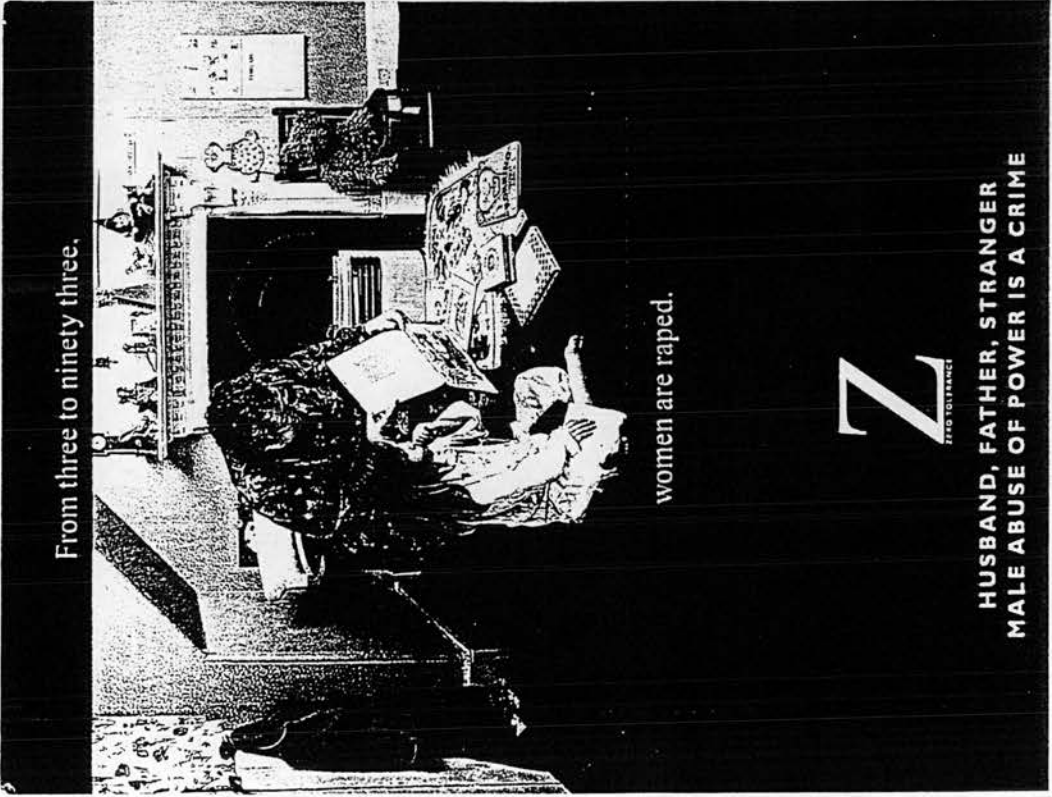


fig.8.3

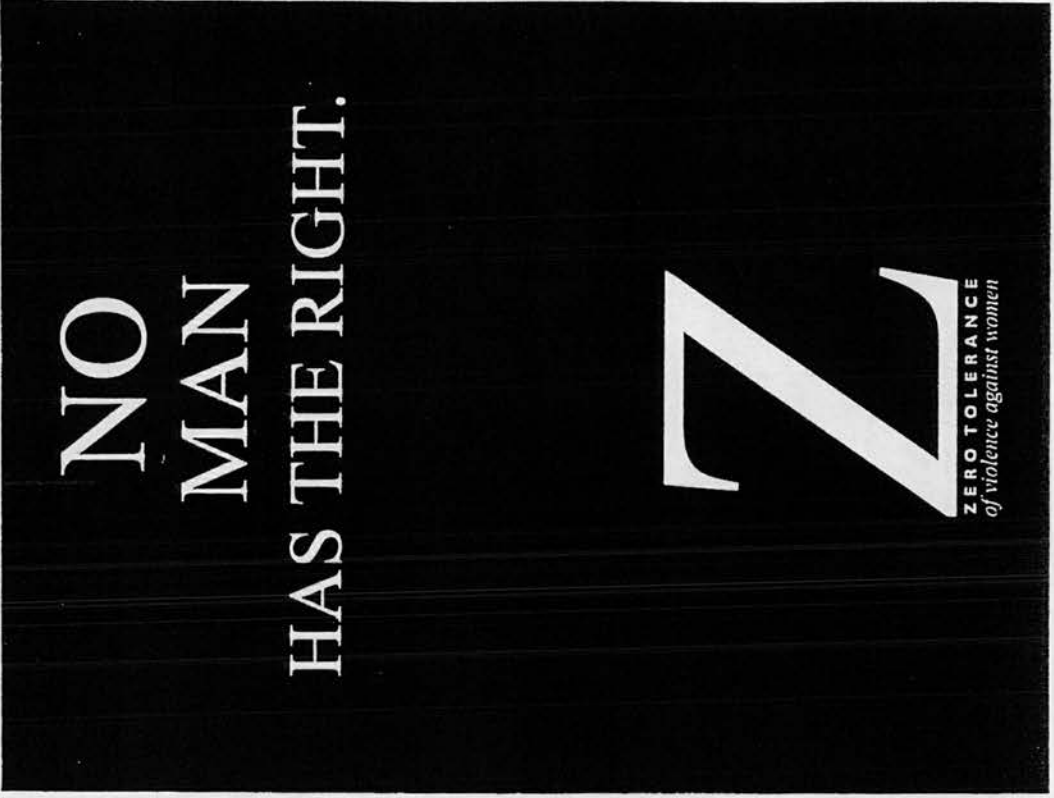


fig.8.4

Visuals from the Zero Tolerance Campaign : First Phase

An Evaluation of *Zero Tolerance*

In 1993, an evaluation of the first phase was carried out by Jenny Kitzinger and Kate Hunt of Glasgow University Media Group. The evaluation was designed to assess public response to the campaign, including public perceptions as to the need for, and acceptability of, advertising campaigns around issues of violence. A street survey was conducted with a representative sample of 228 people in Edinburgh in order to elicit the views of the general population. In addition, focus group discussions were conducted with a number of interest groups in order to explore a range of opinions.

Findings from the evaluation indicated that the campaign had been extremely successful in both attracting attention and in gaining a positive reaction from the public. The campaign achieved its initial aim of generating public debate and highlighting the prevalence of male violence, sending out a clear message that violence was not to be tolerated. Focus group data suggested that the campaign raised people's knowledge and discontent about the shortfall in provision of services for women subjected to violence and the shortcomings of the legal system in protecting women and children. People also recognised that the campaign was seeking to debunk some of the myths around violence against women, such as the myth that it is only a working class problem, or that most sexual assaults are perpetrated by strangers. Moreover, the women in the images were seen as 'people with rights'. The evaluation suggested that the campaign has provided people with new information and perspectives and has been thought provoking (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993). A member of an incest survivors self-help group, who took part in the evaluation exercise, described her reaction to the campaign:

You know that sort of prickly feeling, like when you see something and thinkoooooh! It was when all the posters were up along the tripods along Princes Street [...] I couldn't believe it. I was going along in the bus and I thought: 'There's one of there. There's another one! They haven't got them all along Princes Street ...YES! They have! It was very good. [I felt] Yes, this is what I want. I want people to see this. (quoted in Kitzinger and Hunt, p.21).

Uptake and development of the campaign

The Edinburgh campaign sparked enormous interest from other local authorities and organisations in Britain, Europe and world-wide. For example, in 1995 the campaign was run in South Australia. Meanwhile, a co-ordinated and coherent campaign has developed in Scotland since 1994, which involves several local authorities and other agencies. As a result, the campaign now covers most of Scotland. One of the original *Zero Tolerance* team has commented that they had achieved a Scottish national campaign 'by the back door'. In 1994, *Zero Tolerance* was launched by Tayside Regional Council with leading support from City of Dundee District Council, Strathclyde Regional Council with leading support from the City of Glasgow District Council, and Central Regional Council. It was also taken up by the City of Aberdeen District Council, with some funding from Grampian RC, Strathclyde RC, the largest local authority in Britain until its abolition in 1996, and Central RC both worked in partnership with their district councils, including Conservative-controlled local authorities, health boards, voluntary sector groups and other agencies. Although their campaigns have necessarily been more diffuse than Edinburgh's they have made significant progress in inter-agency development work. For example, both Central RC and Strathclyde RC have developed educational materials and have worked with secondary schools.

The campaign has developed a comprehensive and innovative publicity strategy amongst participating authorities in Scotland including advertising on trains, subways and buses. There have been conferences, seminars, banners at festivals, training courses, theatre projects, local press and radio campaigns, school studies and a wide range of community events. Edinburgh continued to innovate, with a 'No Excuses' bus advertising and poster campaign in 1994. This challenged excuses commonly given for violence with the slogan: *Blame the Weather, Blame the Drink, Blame the Woman ...There is Never An Excuse* . It also launched a football initiative with star players from the city's two football clubs pledging their support for the campaign, and *Zero Tolerance* publicity prominently displayed at the club grounds. In parallel to the public face of *Zero Tolerance*, EDC has also developed a 'within council' strategy including a domestic violence policy for its own staff. This policy was drawn up with the help of the public sector union UNISON, and believed to be the first of its kind in Britain.

Political and media support has also been high profile. A motion in support of the campaign was laid before the House of Commons and the campaign was raised in the European Parliament. Edinburgh District Council lobbied the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) to call for a co-ordinated national, regional and local anti-violence campaign. It is widely accepted that the Scottish Office Crime Prevention Council's £300,000 advertising campaign against domestic violence which was launched in June 1994 was at least partly a result of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign and associated lobbying (Engender, 1995).

In 1995, participating Scottish local authorities launched a joint football initiative which took the campaign to the grounds of most major football clubs. The second phase of the joint poster campaign called: *What's Love Got to Do With It ?*, ran in the summer of 1995, backed up by a cinema advertisement aimed at 15 to 25 year olds. This phase tackled common myths about the causes of violence and built upon the earlier 'Excuses' phase in Edinburgh. The work of Scottish authorities, both jointly and individually, on *Zero Tolerance* has been cited as examples of best practice in an EOC (Scotland) report on equal opportunities initiatives in local government (Breitenbach, 1995a).

A national *Zero Tolerance* Trust was proposed in order to co-ordinate the development and promotion of the campaign and related issues on a Scottish and UK-wide basis in light of the growth in interest. Another key function of the Trust was to safeguard the campaign from fragmentation as a result of local government reorganisation post 1996. However the work of the campaign received a major blow with the shocking death of the creator and designer of *Zero Tolerance*, photographer Franki Raffles, who died suddenly on December 6, 1994 shortly after giving birth to twin girls. Franki whose powerful images of women have been exhibited all over Britain and overseas was a key activist for women's issues. Copyright for *Zero Tolerance* and its distinctive logos was owned by Franki Raffles and plans for the National *Zero Tolerance* Trust - of which she was to have been a trustee - were put in some uncertainty while legal issues were resolved. However the Trust was launched in 1995, albeit on a less ambitious scale than previously proposed.

Discussion: Factors for success

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign was high risk in its radical approach, it was provocative and delivered uncomfortable messages about the nature and prevalence of violence. Campaigners shared an understanding with feminist policy analysts and activists that policies which challenge existing power relations were likely to provoke resistance and counter-attack (Firestone, 1972; Gelb and Palley, 1987; Boneparth and Soper, 1988; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994; Young, 1990) Thus, the EDC women's unit had expected political and public backlash, especially from men. Yet the campaign has been characterised by high levels of support and consensus. This is not to say that there has not been criticism. The messages of the campaign have undoubtedly offended certain politicians and other sections of the community. The main criticisms of the campaign have been that the messages are anti men and that statistics used have been inaccurate. There has been some criticism from politicians from all parties, both men and women, the most serious when the SNP Lord Provost of Edinburgh complained to the *Sunday Times Scotland* that he did not support the 'extreme' campaign, but was powerless to act because 'any word of criticism is seen as male chauvinism'.⁸ He later withdrew his comments. There has been criticism from several quarters about the statistics used, although all figures have been attributed and verified. However none of the more public challenges to *Zero Tolerance* have been sustained, nor have they been officially backed by opposition party groupings.

The campaign has also provoked some extreme responses. EDC women's unit, and subsequently campaign workers in the other authorities, have had to deal with some abusive phonecalls and angry correspondence. There have been instances where posters have been defaced, and other *Zero Tolerance* materials vandalised. EDC Women's Unit noted in general that men's protest became more vocal when the fourth poster in the first phase was released - which consisted of a giant 'Z' logo and the slogan '*No Man Has The Right*'. However, in contrast to the reaction provoked by the work of women's committees in the 1980s, publicly expressed opposition to the campaign has not been sustained and there is little evidence to date of an organised political backlash.

⁸ 'Zero Tolerance Doesn't Add Up'. *Sunday Times Scotland*, (23.10.94).

The fact that *Zero Tolerance* was a strong, innovative and well-planned campaign was no guarantee for success. However there were several key factors which reduced the possibility of conflict and failure, and which facilitated the successful implementation and dissemination of the campaign. Firstly, there were a range of enabling political and structural contexts, which provided a 'window of opportunity' for a feminist campaign. These include the existence of women's and equal opportunities committees in Scottish initiatives in general (see also Chapter 7); and Edinburgh in particular. In addition, the strength of women's networking, particularly within Scotland is discussed as significant

At a specific level several factors can be identified which contributed towards the successful launch and development of the campaign in Edinburgh and elsewhere. These are: the initial management of the campaign.; and the support of women in the local state, both councillors and officers. The campaign was also able to tap the changed social and political context in which issues such as violence are discussed - a striking feature of which is the social, political and personal salience of the issue of violence to a wide variety of women.

Enabling contexts I : women's committees

In Scotland, the existence of a number of proactive local government women's and/or equal opportunities committees was discussed in Chapter 7. The campaign thus originated in an environment where there were women's committees and equal opportunities structures in place, which Halford has suggested signals that gender politics are at least formally accepted as part of the local authority agenda (1988). In addition, the strength and cohesiveness of Scottish local government women's committees in contrast to those in England has been noted by several researchers (Edwards, 1995:58; Lovenduski and Randall, 1993).

Edinburgh District Council (EDC) has had a women's committee with specialist staff, in place since 1985. It is the longest surviving women's committee in Scotland, and is commonly recognised as one of its most innovative. Women are visible as both councillors and officers within the authority, which has been led by a progressive Labour Left administration since 1984; and it remains committed (at time of writing) to an equality agenda. Key support for *Zero Tolerance* has been

maintained by the Labour leadership - Mark Lazarovitz when the campaign was first launched; and then Lesley Hinds from her election as council leader in 1993.

Ellen Kelly, women's unit policy officer at Edinburgh since 1987 notes that EDC has learned lessons from the experiences of the GLC women's committee, in particular it has become skilled at producing alternative information and publicity about its work to counter media attacks.⁹ In addition, it has established and maintained good communications with women's groups and community groups. Kelly argues that these lessons have both informed the committees' work and supported them in tackling political, organisational and media resistance to change. She suggests these links may also have contributed to the survival of the women's committee (Kelly, 1995:116)

By the time EDC women's unit launched *Zero Tolerance*, it had developed strategies of popular consultation and had strong, well-rooted links with women in the community and with women's groups. In addition, unlike the experience of some other women's units, especially in the 1980s, it had become successfully established within the political and organisational structures of the authority; and it was staffed by officers experienced both in local government and in campaign work. All Scottish local authorities who have participated in the *Zero Tolerance* campaign have had equalities structures with specialist staff in post. This suggests that the Scottish context in general, and the Edinburgh context in particular worked to create space for feminists to create and implement initiatives.

Enabling contexts II : Women's networking

The campaign also took place against a backdrop of extensive, formal and informal, networking and exchanges of information between women's groups in Scotland.

⁹ It is not immune to hostile media coverage. For example the so-called 'Condomgate' incident in March 1992 when a Conservative woman councillor caused a political and media storm by producing what she alleged were used condoms found after a party in the City Chambers to celebrate International Women's Day. The media responded with headlines such as 'Sin City Chambers: Orgy Outrage over Used Condoms', (*Daily Record*, March 9, 1992). The Chief Executive launched an inquiry and the 'evidence' was sent off to the public analyst where they were duly found to contain nothing but carpet dust. ('Orgy Claim Missed Target', *Edinburgh Evening News*, March 27, 1992). See extensive coverage between March 9, 1992 and March 27, 1992 in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Herald*, *The Scotsman*, *Scottish Sun* and *Daily Record*.

Networking between women's groups is well established in Scotland, facilitated by both geographical size and also the marked mobilisation of a wide cross-section of women , partisan and non-partisan, feminist and non-feminist, around the issue of women's representation in the proposed Scottish Parliament (Brown and Galligan 1993; Brown, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996 ; Levy, 1992; Burness, 1995).

There has been an active women's movement in Scotland since the early 1970s which paralleled the demands and concerns of the women's movement in the rest of Britain. Esther Breitenbach (1990, 1995b) has argued that the movement has become more distinctively Scottish in the 1980s and 1990s, partly in reaction to the perceived adverse affects of Thatcherism for Scottish women, but more specifically as a result of mobilisation around the issue of constitutional reform in Scotland.

Generally good relationships exist between women's groups and women's and local government equalities structures in Scotland. Several key activists in the women's refuge and rape crisis movement are now Labour councillors. In other cases, existing councillors from all parties have subsequently become involved in anti-violence work or campaigning. Membership of women's groups tends to overlap, for example, *Engender*, the Scottish feminist research and campaigning group, draws members from political parties, trades unions, women's organisations, the women's movement, academia and the public and voluntary sectors. Kelly has described the interweaving of women's groups in Scotland:

All have their own objectives but these often overlap, and there is considerable if informal interlinking between participants, which ebbs and flows with the demands of current issues.(1995:193).

This distinctive Scottish context has resulted in a developing sense of connection between a wide range of women's groups and between a variety of activist women on an explicit gender issue. As such, there has been an emerging sense of a 'broad kirk' and, with that, some blurring of the boundaries between community groups, autonomous women's organisations, civic groups and party politics; and between different strands of feminism (Brown, 1995b).

Therefore the campaign originated in an environment where there were structures in place; where there was extensive networking and exchanges of information

between women's groups; and where there was experience of working in loose alliance around specific issues. Indeed, the existence of women's networks has been an important factor, not only as a supportive and enabling context, but also because of the key role they played in the dissemination and progress of campaign throughout Scotland and Britain. For example, the campaign is supported and promoted in local authorities throughout Britain by the alliance of women's committees, the Women's Local Authority Network (WLAN).

Enabling contexts III - salience of the issue

It was a bit like I'd died and gone to heaven. There above all the shoppers in Edinburgh's Princes Street ran the bold message, 'There is never an excuse.' There on the grassy bank halfway up the Mound sat a white Z of flowers. There at Hibernian a huge 'Z' symbol was emblazoned across the nets. Men on the terracing were eating their pies out of cartons and boxes overprinted with *Zero Tolerance* statistics [...] In doctor's surgeries patients sat beside posters proclaiming, 'No Man has the Right'. In swimming pools school galas splashed off beside the happy image of three young women, and the message, 'When They Say No, they mean no' [...] The campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women is really HAPPENING all over Edinburgh...(Riddoch, 1994).

Broadcaster and journalist Lesley Riddoch, writing in the Scottish feminist magazine *Harpies and Quines* voiced the sense of empowerment felt by many women in Scotland since the launch of *Zero Tolerance*. Anecdotal evidence from a range of sources suggests a high sense of identification with campaign amongst the public; the campaign has in some cases galvanised communities.¹⁰

The scale of public support for the campaign was far beyond the expectations of the campaign team and served to strengthen the women's committee's claim to speak for ordinary women's concerns. This support bolstered any 'wobbles' in the construction and maintenance of political consensus. It also indicated a changed

¹⁰ See discussions in *Harpies and Quines* op.cit.; Roz Foley, 'Zero Tolerance' in *Trouble and Strife* No. 27 (Winter 1993); Sibusiso Mavolwane and Jill Radford, 'Women Support Zero Tolerance Campaign', *Rights of Women Bulletin*, (Autumn/ Winter, 1994), who comment that, 'in Scotland, where the campaign was first launched, the growth of public awareness and general participation in the localities has been enormous' (p.34).

political and social context in which violence is discussed, arguably as a result of the groundwork of the women's movement in raising the issues, and the possible diffusion of some feminist values into popular culture including a greater willingness by women to 'break the silence'. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign tapped a wellspring of support and recognition from women in the community, and also women in local authorities, officers, workers and councillors. In the first few months of the Edinburgh campaign, the unit received hundreds of letters and phonecalls from women. Campaign workers in all participating authorities report that they have been overwhelmed by the support of women.

The Edinburgh evaluation exercise found that although support for the campaign was generally high, it was gendered. Women were consistently more supportive of the campaign than men, and more knowledgeable about the issues. For instance, 86% of women felt 'positive' or 'very positive' about the campaign compared with 68% of men (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993:7).¹¹ In addition women's support was more *active*, for example they were more likely to have discussed the issues. Both *Zero Tolerance* campaigners and the Edinburgh evaluation exercise found that women were more accepting of the *Zero Tolerance* statistics about violence than were men; and that a major reason for accepting or rejecting the statistics lay in people's personal experience or their knowledge of friends or relatives with personal experience.

Those who had friends they knew had been raped, battered or abused were more likely to accept the figures than those who believed that they did not know anyone who had been physically or sexually assaulted. (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993:10).

Many women who had experienced violence and sexual abuse welcomed the campaign. Participants in the evaluation focus groups said *Zero Tolerance* posters made them feel less isolated and made them feel better able to deal with past experiences and instances of continuing violence. 'They complained it was *silence* which was the problem - not being confronted with unpleasant facts' (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993:25).

¹¹ Table4a: Young people, particularly those aged between 15 and 29 consistently expressed stronger support for the campaign. However even in the oldest age group (50 plus years) only 12% described their response as 'quite' or 'very negative'.

To summarise, therefore, in the case of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign, a number of enabling factors existed at both Scottish and local level. These contexts worked to make space for feminists to create and implement initiatives; they also provided crucial support networks.

Initial Management of campaign

The success of *Zero Tolerance* can also be attributed to the initial management of the campaign by the Edinburgh team. There was an anticipation that there would be a backlash - based on both theory and practise. Therefore extensive steps were taken to minimise and manage the backlash - and conversely to work to build and maintain support and legitimacy for the campaign. In addition, the campaign team sought to prevent any dilution of the message by retaining control over the definition of the issue, and the development of materials. The campaign was legitimised by strategies of popular consultation and targeted research, as discussed earlier. The strength of the campaign came from EDC women's committee's authority to speak for 'ordinary women'. This is a feature and a strength of women's committees and equal opportunities committees who have, in many cases, pioneered and developed effective strategies of popular consultation.

The expertise and experience of specialist women's groups like Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) , Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (ERC) and Mothers of Sexually Abused Children (MOSAC) was also recognised and they were consulted about the material. In addition, a relatively long period of time, some six months, was spent pre-launch in lobbying in order to build up a broad consensus of support for the issue from key political, civic, religious and community groups. The campaign secured advance support from various notable agencies and opinion-leaders, including Lothian and Borders Police and all the main churches and, crucially, the local media. The city's evening paper the Edinburgh Evening News adopted the issue and ran its own 'Free Us From Fear' campaign in parallel with *Zero Tolerance* with feature and news articles on each of the issues addressed by the posters.

In addition, cross-party political support was secured within the authority, but again the detailed content of the campaign was not discussed. Apart from the convenor of the Women's Committee, no other politicians saw the material prior to the launch. This was a conscious strategy by the officers who were clear that they needed to

keep the campaign under wraps until the launch to prevent the radical message being diluted. They argued from the experience of other women's groups and women's committee campaigns that issues tended to be modified or diluted.

The support of women councillors

Perhaps the most striking evidence of common interests and understanding around issues of violence has been in the crucial political support for *Zero Tolerance* from women councillors, both feminist and non - feminist across the four major parties. This support was consistent across all four target authorities. For example, in Edinburgh, one of the key supporters of the campaign has been Christine Richard, a Conservative councillor and former Conservative group leader, who commented that she has discovered that the quickest way to clear a space around oneself at a cocktail party is to raise *Zero Tolerance*.

It has caused quite a few ruffles among men and women in all political parties, because it is an uncomfortable thing to be faced with.[...] I think the campaign has done a very good job in raising public awareness and in causing debate and controversy[...] I have consistently opposed the sort of loony elements of women's committee spending and thinking in this council [...] but this is something that I wholeheartedly support, because unless you have the image raising of the issues then you will not get action. (Conservative).

More than half the women councillors interviewed for the study (59%) rated *Zero Tolerance* and / or issues of violence as important on their personal political agendas. A further 35% saw the issue as quite important and only 6% viewed it as of little or no importance. There were high levels of support for the initiative from women councillors across party. Many of these women who were critics of women's committees cited it as 'the best thing the women's committee has ever done'.

Irene Kitson, deputy convenor of EDC's women's committee spoke about her astonishment at the level of cross party support the campaign engendered:

We were sceptical about [...] how much support we would actually get - in that it's a very emotive issue. I think we were quite astonished when the Tories didn't raise any questions about it at all and were quite supportive. (Labour).

She argued that one of the reasons for cross party support has been the changed social and political context in which the issue is discussed, that to publicly disagree

with a campaign of that kind would have been 'political suicide', but that there was also a recognition of the importance of the issue

[The Conservatives] know that it's an important issue for women [...] to be fair to them, and I'm not often fair to them (laugh) [...]there were a good few of them who actually do believe that it was needed. (Labour).

This is not to say, however, that there was unconditional support for the campaign. Not all women shared the feminist analysis of violence as a male abuse of power. Some, particularly Conservative women, favoured a stress upon protection and reform of sentencing policy for sex offender. Others would have preferred an emphasis on providing women with information about rights and resources. However, women who did not share, and sometimes objected to, the feminist analysis of violence which informed the campaign, nevertheless supported and promoted *Zero Tolerance*.¹²

There was all-party support, perhaps not for all the details, and perhaps not for all the aims - or the emphasis - certainly for the aims but perhaps not for the emphasis - Liberal Democrats would have liked more emphasis on protection [...] When it comes to protection women need to know what is tolerable behaviour when perhaps it's called domestic - what is acceptable and what isn't. I think there has been a view from society that domestic violence is still the norm. *Zero Tolerance* has, I think actually got home some uncomfortable truths to some people. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Several objected to the gender specificity of the campaign and were careful to note that women were violent too. One woman described the *Zero Tolerance* slogan 'The Male Abuse of Power is a Crime' as 'over-egging the sauce'. However even those women who made this point tended to discuss violence, in the main, in respect of male violence upon females; several women contradicted themselves by contending that both men and women were violent, whilst also asserting that violence and sexual abuse was an issue which united women across class and political party.

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign was in general seen to be concerned with too important an issue to let women's reservations about its analysis or 'emphasis' prevent them from giving their support. Women who made criticisms of some aspects of the campaign also gave praise. Even the most vocal female critic of *Zero Tolerance*, Beth Brereton, a Conservative councillor at Edinburgh, made it clear

¹² For the remainder of the chapter, an indication of feminist identification will be attributed to quotes, unless the interviewee is named.

that she supported the *principle* of the campaign, although she objected strongly to its 'radical feminist' emphasis in practise.

If they [*Zero Tolerance* campaign team] bring it back on course which is just to keep on reminding people that this type of behaviour is not acceptable and that they will be prosecuted and really just keep it at the top of the small 'p' political agenda - that's fine. (Conservative).

In all four authorities studied, there was a striking determination shared by women across party and across generation that the issues of violence, sexual violence and sexual abuse should be 'out in the open'. *Zero Tolerance* was seen as part of an ongoing process of making violence and abuse visible. There was also widespread recognition that the scale of violence against women was very high.

There's no doubt whatsoever that an awful lot of women have been subjected to appalling violence. I wasn't aware of the scale of it until I became a councillor. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

I think it is probably a lot larger and a lot deeper than the average person thinks. Perhaps people like myself [...] women that are involved - they probably realise it is on a fairly wide scale [...] and I think the most deadly aspect to me is the violence in the home. It needn't be somebody thumping somebody, it can be far more subtle than that : bullying and mental bullying and all sorts of more subtle things. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

I know there's a lot of people who think it has escalated - I do in my heart of hearts think its always been at this kind of level. Much higher than we would want. I believe that it is because we do communicate so much better now - we're aware of it, much more aware of it. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

The 'under the carpet' approach, when it was never talked about, is thankfully now being shed and people are becoming more able and willing to talk about the experience. I have a horrible feeling that we're still only at the surface and there's a heck of a lot more icebergs still under the water - and it worries me a bit that our society is in such a state. (Scottish National, non feminist).

As noted earlier, the evaluation exercise showed that people were more likely to accept figures if they had experienced violence or had knowledge of others experience. Many women interviewees had knowledge of the issues through their work as councillors. District councillors, in particular, saw themselves at 'the sharp end' through their responsibility for dealing with housing matters.

It's the *normality* of it all. In my ward, there's a woman in her fifties who walks with a limp. I asked her, did she fall ? 'Och no, it's him, he used to beat me up a lot - all my life. He's getting too aul' now so he disnae hit me ony more'. This goes on. (Labour, self-identified feminist).

I feel [domestic violence] is something women don't admit to. The few cases I have seen could be the tip of the iceberg. Also I'm sitting here in my cosy suburb, where it will be different to some inner city wards. I don't *think* it's widespread in my ward, having said that, the ones I have dealt with I've dealt with only because of housing queries - they've needed to be rehoused or whatever - so they've *had* to say something otherwise I think they wouldn't. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

There have been times when I've had to phone the police and say, 'Will you please go round to so-and-so, he beats her up and I want this investigated'. Some of the beatings - there's one woman I've come across who has been stabbed several times. They're not married any more- there's an interdict out on him, and when you phone the police they say they haven't got it. I don't know how [women] live with it. (Labour, non feminist).

As a result of their experience, many female councillors argued that violence against women was a massive problem which was hidden, and under reported. However not all reaction was entirely sympathetic - a small number of women were impatient that women 'kept going back' into abusive situations.

I'm sure this is controversial if I say to you that I have been appalled by the weakness of women - because we have helped people and gone out of our way and done everything physically possible and then the wife still goes back to the husband. Now, I cannot understand that. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Other councillors had experience of dealing with issues of violence through other work or counselling activities. One Scottish National councillor spoke about her work as a medical social worker counselling women survivors of child sexual abuse, 'I have spent hours trying to convince a woman that she was in no way guilty as a child'. A number of councillors spoke about their campaigning work within trade unions, writing and speaking to resolutions against violence against women:

Working with so many women - you are always aware of the different violences that are projected on women. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Refuge and rape crisis groups have long recognised the potential of lobbying elected women members to support their work. A number of women had become involved in the field as a result of such approaches. A Liberal Democrat councillor discussed her response to a lobby by women's aid campaigners in her area.

I became a member of Women's Aid and a full working member of that because I felt I needed the knowledge and I needed the experience and I had to be able - when I got to my feet if I was going to argue their case for funding I had to know what I was talking about. And that probably was the one thing I felt that being a female - there's tremendous responsibility for because I was a woman

and I thought it's not me I'm letting down here, it's everybody else if I don't get this right. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

A majority of women councillors had personal experience of violence, including sexual assault and sexual abuse; or knowledge of close friends and relatives who had been assaulted or abused, and as such felt a connection with other women. A number of women said they doubted that any woman could avoid the experience of violence or abuse of some description at some time of their lives. (The following quotes are anonymous).

I think every woman has had some experience of either sexual assault or whatever or attacked or beaten up. I think if you speak to every woman - people always seem quite shocked by the statistics - but then, if you actually think about your own experiences and speak to other women, then you realise the statistics are probably underestimated. People tend not to speak about it, tend to sort of say. 'Well, it was my fault', or, 'I'll take that down to experience and I'll move on' - and they don't ever report things, and they don't ever speak about it. So I think one of the good things is it's [*Zero Tolerance*] actually brought people out to speak about the issue.

My daughter - her husband used to beat her up something stupid and she never let on, it wasn't until the other daughter went up one day and found her really beaten, he'd bounced her head off all four walls.

Women politicians, in common with women in the Edinburgh evaluation exercise, felt that one of the most important roles for the *Zero Tolerance* campaign was to 'break the silence'.

There was sexual abuse when I was a kid [...]That's made *Zero Tolerance* so important to me. I blame that [the abuse] for a lot of things, maybe that's why my marriage didn't last. I have now got grand-daughters and that fear is still there[...] It really was a stigma before, now with this *Zero Tolerance* - it's really giving women the opportunity to get it off their chests because until such time as they do ... I used to make myself ill when I was younger, I had nobody to talk to.

Only one women argued that the campaign should not be undertaken because it would increase councillors' workloads.

It's just going to give us more work - towards that sort of problem and we really cannot handle any more, we're not there as *counsellors* [...] I don't know about the rest of them, but I certainly don't like dealing with that sort of thing, I'm more interested in planning. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

A number of women, feminists and non feminists, made clear links between differing forms of abuse and named emotional and psychological abuses as

violence. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is rooted in a feminist analysis of violence as an abuse of power. This power analysis was shared by several councillors across party, in the main feminists:

Zero Tolerance is just simply saying that any kind of abuse is in fact a power thing - and it is! (Conservative, qualified feminist).

A power analysis was less explicit in the discussions of many other women, although there was some resonance; women, including traditional Conservatives, explained violence in slightly different terms: men were seen as bullies, as possessive, as seeing women as 'chattels'.

They are little men proving they're big men - just bullies (Conservative, non feminist).

Male violence was commonly seen as a historical or cultural legacy of traditional unequal social relations. Sometimes violence was seen as the result of a 'cycle of abuse', where children were brought up to expect or accept family violence.

It's a cultural thing, its a Scottish thing, it's deeply inbred - and I think it's a male chauvinist pig attitude to women - and exposing it and putting it on the television and on the buses might just be the conflict that faces up to it. (Liberal Democrat, non-feminist).

Violence is caused by an historical lack of respect for females and for what they are. (Scottish National, non-feminist).

In a small number of cases violence was explained in terms of biological determinism:

Testosterone has a lot to answer for - they [men] are just more aggressive, you get it all through the animal kingdom...mammals anyway. (Liberal Democrat, qualified feminist).

The majority of women gave a combination of individual pathology or social structural reasons. Unemployment, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse were all commonly cited as reasons, as conditions which were 'breeding grounds for violence'.

Men at home all the time, it's nae good - men normally turn to drink or drugs, especially if they're unemployed. (Labour, non feminist).

There isn't any excuse and that's the bottom line - there *isn't* an excuse - but I suppose when you start to analyse each case and what each male has done or whatever - you will find 'reasons' that you can log against and say, maybe that's

why they were like that - but there is no excuse, there is none. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Many women, however, emphasised that violence was a problem which cut across social class.

Domestic violence covers all strands of society, it's not just drunken men coming home from the pub on a Friday night. (Labour, non feminist).

Although some women still accepted many of the stereotypes or myths surrounding violence against women, many did not. The problem, in common with other 'women's issues', was seen as a complex and many faceted both as an issue, and in terms of appropriate policy formulation.

I don't know where the bigger problem is: the women who say, 'Right, I've had enough, I'm off', they have got enormous problems like finding houses, like *not* being found by the violent partner; but I don't know if that is the bigger problem, or is it the ones who stay and put up with it and - just because of the particular culture - feel that this is really perfectly all right, that this just how life is.? That worries me more actually, that women just expect to be treated like that. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

The way women councillors discuss the complexity of violence and their recognition of the way the problems and needs of women were filtered through 'difference' like class, ethnicity or rural/urban location revealed a great deal of understanding about the reality of violence for many women. For example, a rural councillor argued that isolation and traditional values created additional problems for women experiencing domestic violence in the far North West of Scotland.

The fact that half the community doesn't know it is going on and the fact that she had nowhere to go and the fact that, again, we're back to this - it is almost seen as her fault. If there's a bust-up, 'Och, it's bound to be Mrs so-and-so just provoking him into doing something'. It's very macho in some of the places [...] I suppose in the rural community men are still very much - can't do much wrong - it's changing but it is still a problem - it's her fault, it's not his. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Although these complexities were not raised by every woman in the study, there was evidence of awareness and knowledge. This was sometimes as a result of previous involvement with the issues through contact with women constituents or clients (as discussed earlier), and also involvement in having to formulate policy, for instance on housing allocations to domestic violence victims and their children; and also experience of interagency working parties, domestic violence forums and women's health working groups.

I used to be on a working group about violent marriages [...] It was quite a good committee because it did take into account that some men were subjected to violence as well, but I do think something more has to be done and the resources at the moment are not available to do it - to deal with violence in the home [...] It is an area which covers all spheres - I mean it doesn't just happen in working class homes - happens right across the board and I think that is an area where *political will* is needed to do something about it. (Conservative, non feminist).

Several women spoke about their increased awareness as a result of previous contact with anti-violence organisations; and also as a result of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign.

I think working with younger women councillors had certainly started to raise my awareness anyhow - things that I had accepted as you can't do anything about them so let's just work our way round them - I'd begun to see that's not the best way to do things. I think certainly the *Zero Tolerance* Campaign - I mean I was aware of Women's Aid and other organisations, Rape Crisis and things like that before - but I don't think I was aware of the need for resources - the lack of resources - the different groups of women who are discriminated against - older women with children - rather women with older children, how difficult it is for them to find any help or support. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Potential difficulties in running a public education campaign to highlight the problem of violence when existing support services are inadequately resourced was discussed by several women. One woman councillor, an adult survivor of child sexual abuse and a firm supporter of the campaign nevertheless made this criticism.

I think the *Zero Tolerance* campaign has been - I'm going to be quite harsh - I think there has been a slight irresponsibility OK, in the sense that, although people have fully understood the need to do it, they haven't reckoned on the toll it has on people. Therefore the *can of worms* they've actually opened with it is, perhaps, not going to be resourced sufficiently well. And I worry because I said that because I knew and I think to some extent I had a problem in that I *knew* but I couldn't explain to people *how* I knew. (Anon).

Margaret McGregor, convenor of EDC's women's committee explained a difficult dilemma that *Zero Tolerance* had posed.

I don't see a resources crisis as imminent - it *is* a crisis at the moment. But we warned the agencies that would happen. I mean right from the start - the six months before the campaign hit the streets we had Rape Crisis, Women's Aid, Mothers of Sexual Abused Children - all these organisations were actually involved in planning the campaign - so they knew from the outset that they were going to be really stretched, and they are, they're turning people away which is dreadful - women who really need help. And also with the Scottish Office campaign that's also increased demands on these services - and the

government has put no extra money, it spent about £300, 000 or something on that campaign and - where's the backup?

That was one of the arguments that [some critics] used, 'Well, it's OK to do *Zero Tolerance* but what we really need is cash for Women's Aid etc.' And it's difficult - do you not do the campaign because there's a lack of resources? Or do you risk doing it knowing there is going to be a problem? I suppose it is like cancer, you've got to first of all point out what the problem is before you can treat it - and what's happened in the past is that people have just closed their eyes and pretended it wasn't happening. (Labour).

Several women were also concerned that the *Zero Tolerance* campaign should lead to real increases in practical help for women and increased funding for the provision of refuges and other services. However, they argued that what *Zero Tolerance* had done was to increase the political priority of violence and to raise the issue of funding provision higher up the political agenda.

To actually admit it [the problem of violence] through something as high profile as *Zero Tolerance* is a major step forward. In some ways the scene had been set because of the fact that assault was on the agenda politically anyway.- that had always been on *our* agenda - but it was never one we were able to get to the top of the pile. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

In addition a number of councillors, Conservative women in particular, were concerned with improvements in the criminal justice system to better protect women and children, such as stiffer sentences and the appointment of more women judges.

Women councillors' support for *Zero Tolerance* : 'a sort of solidarity'

Women understand. We may differ politically... one thing is we're all female; we all experience the same problems to a certain extent. Your financial position doesn't alter the fact that you're a woman [...] or how you're treated by men so I suppose that does lead to a sort of solidarity. (Labour, non feminist).

Being a woman colours everything. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

I think that it is quite horrifying the kind of simmering undercurrent of [...] *awfulness* towards women - but it's there, it's absolutely there and it's just below the surface. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Women councillors gave their support in a number of ways. They worked with women officers and with activists within their own parties to push the campaign in their areas. Several women councillors in participating authorities have publicly spoken about their own experience of violence and there is some evidence that male

politicians who were generally sceptical about the prevalence of violence, or were uncertain about the campaign, have changed their minds as a result of these disclosures.

In the case of one of the authorities in the current study, resistance to the proposed campaign within the Labour group evaporated when a woman councillor disclosed her experience of sexual abuse as a child. The woman, who had never spoken about her experience in a large mixed group before, made an on-the-spot decision to speak out after male colleagues began talking over the *Zero Tolerance* presentations being made to a crucial Labour group meeting; and the safe passage of the initiative as Labour group policy looked uncertain. After her disclosure the campaign was adopted as policy with no objections. She describes the impact and consequences of her intervention.

Some of the men didn't know where to put themselves, some of the men were shocked - and some of the men woke up, I'm quite clear that some of the men woke up. And in fact there were one or two men who were very supportive to me personally then and afterwards- like, you know, bringing me a glass of water, checking that I was OK. It was strange because when I actually declared it, I also cracked and burst into tears towards the end and I hadn't expected to do that. I'm told that it changed the atmosphere in that room [...] there was a little bit of debate afterwards - but nobody was going to do anything else with it at that stage except accept it. So, did I do anything to get it on the agenda? The answer's yes, I guess I did probably quite a lot. (Anon).

Personal testimony has been a characteristic feature of feminist politics and feminist strategy, especially in issues of the body, for instance abortion campaigning. However there is evidence that this process has taken place on a large scale in areas where *Zero Tolerance* has been adopted; from straw polls in offices and pubs; to difficult public disclosures by public figures. The validity of personal experience has, it appears, been taken on board by women who would not call themselves feminists in a variety of social, organisational and political settings. There is also evidence that public disclosures have encouraged other women to speak out, sometimes for the first time. The same councillor picks up on the aftermath of her disclosure:

After the Labour group meeting I went up to the Women's Unit and just sat round with some women councillors who just supported me [...] One of the women councillors did alert me later on to the fact that she herself had been abused, and had found it intolerable being in that room at the time I'd said so, but in fact as a consequence she had also opened up the issue with her partner

for the first time ever - I hadn't realised what I was doing when I said it - it was wild. The other thing that was said to me was, 'You don't realise how many other women it has happened to in this room - or how many men in this room are abusers' and I just thought, 'Oh, I'm glad I didn't think of that beforehand' - it really was quite frightening. (Anon).

In addition to making personal testimony, and aligning themselves with the campaign, another major way in which women councillors have helped to progress *Zero Tolerance* was in lobbying their male colleagues. They did this in the initial stages to secure support and, as an ongoing process, they maintained the momentum by discussing and defending the campaign from criticisms especially the charge that the campaign was 'anti-male' and that its message was that 'all men are rapists'. This work has been important in defusing potential resistance and backlash as well as in demonstrating the 'sort of solidarity' that women felt about the issue.

It is a continuous process of re-education. This message is a positive one. It is not doing men down. If you like, it is trying to bring out the best in men: the feminine qualities in men; the caring qualities in men; and letting them see that rape isn't funny in any circumstances. But you don't get these lessons across in one session - you have to sustain them and reinforce them, and you have to keep going. You know, it is not a one-off. (Conservative, self-defined feminist)

I've heard the attitudes of one or two of them [male councillors] saying: 'That's normal - you give them a belt around the ear'. They don't think there's anything wrong - but I see a change in them. They're becoming more aware - I think *Zero Tolerance* is working to educate male councillors. (Labour, non feminist)

Although there was no direct confirmation from Conservative women themselves, a number of Labour women and specialist officers interviewed believed that Conservative women in participating authorities had 'kept the men in line' in their party groups.

Many women saw male criticisms of the campaign as inevitable, because of its challenging message. The picture formed from the interviews is that women have worked hard at defusing opposition from male colleagues- but that they have also challenged the 'blandness' of many men's attitudes on a political and social level; and the way men disregard the issue of violence against women. They have been able to use *Zero Tolerance* to provoke debate.

The fact that it has caused some people to get really angry has been useful [...] people saying, 'This is ridiculous you're labelling all men as this and that'. It has

caused a degree of discussion which is actually quite important because there is a lot of *blandness* around- a lot of, 'Oh, yes violence against women is a dreadful thing', because nobody would actually say it was a good thing! [...] The tendency politically is that, you may have had a resolution passed saying how dreadful it was and nobody opposes it, so it never gets discussed. And that's not necessarily a good thing - the crucial things aren't actually being addressed. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Some of the guys here are really miffed because they think the *Zero Tolerance* campaign adverts are - they're upset at them and I said: "Well, what you have to do is to start thinking about your own attitudes - OK you're not involved in that but we cannae apologise because you're not involved in it. It's *happening*, other guys are doing this - it's happening to women and what you have to say when your pals or your brothers or your cousins or whatever or you're in the pub and people come away with something particularly offensive involving violence in a joke - or they say, 'What she needs is a right smack in the mouth', that sort of thing- challenge them on it. That's all we're saying you should be doing. Don't get mad at us, get mad at them, they're the ones who have made us have to do the campaign in the first place. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

The degree and form of women's support has varied widely. A small number of women have been proactive agents of change, closely involved with the campaign. They pushed it onto agendas, have spoken at meetings and have worked closely with women's officers. Others, whilst not involved at the agenda-setting stage of the campaign have been active in keeping the campaign on track; they have had input into policy development, have encouraged and worked in local groups; they have also intervened in promoting the campaign in departments where officers have resisted. Others have been supportive in smaller ways, displaying *Zero Tolerance* car stickers and badges. Another important way that women politicians have supported the campaign has been in their almost unanimous refusal to be drawn into public criticism of the campaign or to join in any attempted backlash.

This analysis of the effectiveness and pattern of support is tentative and is based upon women politicians' perceptions, which were sometimes at variance with other key actors interviewed. Not all women councillors were even minimally proactive; a few were complacent. However, in general, what these local politicians did *not* do was to trivialise, minimise or deny the problem of violence against women and children. It may have been this display of a minimal level of solidarity which prevented a build up of backlash. This support indicates not only the personal and political salience of the issue for the women councillors themselves but also a recognition of its significance to women in the community. In addition, it also illustrates the marked change in the social context in which issues of violence are

discussed and a possible diffusion of certain feminist values into the cultural mainstream.

Changing attitudes: a political lever

Feminist Journalist and author, Sue Innes, in her inquiry into changes in women's lives since the 1970s writes:

The placards outside our local newsagent's advertise the Evening News 'Free Us From Fear' campaign against ...violence. Twenty five years ago a newspaper editor would have laughed in your face for even suggesting such a thing, let alone see it as a selling point. The bus goes past carrying the black and white *Zero Tolerance* message: NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT. Twenty five years ago some local councillors would not have been ashamed to argue that they did. (Innes, 1995:4).

A number of women spoke about the changed social and political context in which violence is discussed. This was sometimes attributed to the groundwork of the women's movement or to the role of media in raising the issues against a backdrop of changing public attitudes. The progress in ideas of equal opportunities within mainstream cultural values was also implicit in many discussions.

A number of the women councillors and officers interviewed argued that they could make use of this changed political and social climate; in particular 'political correctness' within politics to push forward the campaign and the agenda. The 'rules of the game' were also used. *Zero Tolerance* was a successful campaign in orthodox terms, it generated high levels of positive publicity for participating councils and it won advertising awards. Thus its kudos as a successful campaign has served to dampen potential sources of opposition, both in Edinburgh and in other participating authorities. Some women officers and key councillors identified the desire of male councillors and officers to be associated with a successful campaign as a lever which they had used to get the campaign approved within their ruling groups; or to keep the campaign running.

We seem to have got a bandwagon now - it seems to be on a roll, which is good. Because it has been viewed as a success, it's therefore been disseminated in a way we couldn't have imagined and it's become politically expedient to take it on board. Success has actually generated more success - I think we've now got

to the stage where a lot of councillors don't want to be seen to be opposing it. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

I think the success of the Edinburgh campaign was a factor - it would have been less likely that [the administration] would have taken a risk on something that was completely untried (Labour, self-defined feminist).

The high levels of public support, and the changed social and political context in which violence against women is discussed and challenged has made it difficult for male politicians and other 'opinion-formers' to oppose campaigns like *Zero Tolerance* without appearing 'pro violence'.

Parallel debates

Violence against women may not figure prominently but it is an issue on the political agenda for all the parties in Scotland and in Britain. Within the Scottish Labour Party the issue is discussed in terms of both feminism and also social welfare; within the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party it is seen as part of the wider law and order debate; the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Scottish Liberal Democrats frame violence against women against broader policies of equality of opportunity.

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign, therefore, tapped into parallel debates, particularly those within women's circles of the Scottish Conservative party. 'Judy', a prominent party activist, put violence against women firmly on the Scottish Conservative political agenda after a remarkable speech to the Scottish Conservative Party Conference in May 1993 when she spoke of her ordeal after being attacked by a bogus priest in her Edinburgh home and her horror later when she discovered that her attacker's life sentence had been reduced to six years on appeal.¹³

The successful launch of *Zero Tolerance* in the preceding months to the party conference marked an intensification in an ongoing campaign, within Conservative women's circles in Scotland, to press for action to reform aspects of the criminal justice system in relation to violence against women, particularly erratic sentencing policies for convicted rapists and sex attackers. Although it is not possible to suggest a causal link, there is a perception amongst some of the Conservative

¹³ See coverage in *The Scotsman*, May 15, 1993

women involved that the success of *Zero Tolerance* may have provided 'space' for them to progress their campaign.

A number of female Conservative councillors interviewed were involved in the back-stage manoeuvrings which brought 'Judy's' story to the Scottish Conservative Party Conference. They used EDC women's unit briefings and *Zero Tolerance* statistics to prepare their cases. Daphne Sleight, leader of the opposition Conservative group on Edinburgh District Council said:

Judy had been very disappointed at the reception she had got from the [local constituency] Conservatives. Here she was: a Conservative; had personal knowledge of the thing; was incredibly articulate and had worked out what the problems were as far as the law was concerned; and she was getting nowhere - and the only people who were taking any notice were folk like Victim Support. *Zero Tolerance* was on the go as well; a lot of talk was going on about it ...and *Zero Tolerance* was still held in here [Edinburgh District Council] - it hadn't gone any further - but you couldn't take *Zero Tolerance* to the Conservative party... you couldn't do that. Besides, we have reservations on that. We had to raise it ourselves for our own reason and our own reason was because it happened to one of us - that was the big things - a lot of posh, blue rinse ladies may well see violence against women as happening in types of households not like their own which is a nonsense. This happened to an articulate, rich young woman from an extremely good background ... and she said things to them that absolutely horrified them - and the men. .

We were pleased with that ...because she was immediately put on the Crime Prevention Council and there's a lot of things that have flowed from it. Now, whether we actually get everything we want will need to be seen but it didn't half raise the issue! It didn't half raise the issue! (Conservative).

There is the perception that the intervention of Conservative women, particularly that of 'Judy', together with the public impact of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign was largely responsible for the ambitious domestic violence advertising campaign run by the Scottish Office in 1994, a campaign for which there has been no comparable Home Office initiative. There is also the perception from some Labour women councillors and key officials in Edinburgh that the campaign brought opposition councillors into closer day-to-day working with the women's unit and may have fostered an burgeoning sense of cross-party 'ownership' of the unit. It has been observed that opposition councillors more frequently use the unit to provide briefings on a variety of subjects including the debate on nursery provision than had ever been the case pre-*Zero Tolerance*.

***Zero Tolerance* : feminist intervention or women's politics?**

To what degree was the *Zero Tolerance* campaign a case of a successful feminist intervention; and to what degree does it provide evidence of a case of 'women's politics'? One senior politician in Edinburgh minimised the involvement or impact of elected members in the campaign; and positioned *Zero Tolerance* as an officers' initiative.

I think everybody wants to be associated with success and with a successful campaign everybody will claim all sorts of things. I think it happened simply because we had a very good, strong officer who did it and nobody could have argued against it; and she knew how to work the system as it exists and that's how all good campaigns come about.[They're] officer driven - and they converted the members. (Labour, qualified feminist).

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign was undoubtedly a feminist intervention in the state, and a successful one. The original impetus for the *Zero Tolerance* campaign came from committed feminists working within Edinburgh District Council women's unit. The campaign was an officer-driven response to concerns articulated by women in the community. Its specifically feminist analysis arose from officers and their interface with feminist anti-violence groupings. The uptake and development of the campaign was facilitated by an established and very effective network of 'femocrats', women and equal opportunities officers in Scotland. The impetus for the campaign in the other three authorities was more diffuse with pressure coming from both officers and elected members who had had sight of the Edinburgh campaign; together with activists in local parties, local feminist groups and other community groups, interagency anti-violence forums and women's health working groups.

Whilst it is important not to under-estimate the direction and impetus provided by feminist officers - or femocrats - and other key feminist agents of change; nor to overplay the contribution of some women councillors in participating authorities; there are indications that the campaign is a case study of both a feminist intervention; and of an emerging common agenda between women in politics, women officers and women in the community.

The fact that so many women councillors accepted the campaign, and the issue of violence against women, as a part of politics, would seem to indicate a greater sense

of the acceptance of gender and equalities issues as legitimate across parties within local government than has generally been argued. The case study backs the view that the presence of women councillors in sufficient numbers is significant in terms of both the promotion of women's interests, and the definition of politics as being broader than traditional conceptions.

About three-quarters of the interviewees discussed whether they thought *Zero Tolerance* and similar campaigns were a legitimate function of local government. The question had been designed to allow women to express opposition to the campaign without being identified as 'pro-violence'; and also to explore whether interviewees perceived violence against women to be a legitimate part of politics and their own local political remit. However, all but a handful of interviewees argued that this kind of public education work was indeed the legitimate function of local authorities. There was consensus across party, generation and degree of gender consciousness that tackling the issues and taking a moral lead was a legitimate part of local government.

We're representing a huge amount of people so therefore we have to represent their rights - and anything that is going to enhance their lives, we have to look at; and that sort of issue has to be raised; and that sort of issue has to be looked at - it can't stay hidden under the carpet or behind doors - and that's where it was. (Scottish National, non feminist).

I see it as perfectly legitimate and I'm glad to see that national government is joining in because I think it is possible to change attitudes and make things socially unacceptable which previously were accepted - or swept under the carpet: drink-driving is an obvious one. (Liberal Democrat, non feminist).

Over half the electorate in the City of Edinburgh are women and at the moment it is not safe for women to go out, dressed however they wish, whatever time of day or night in all parts of our city without being in danger of sexual attack. And I think it is perfectly legitimate for civic leaders to be trying to create an environment in which they can do all these things [...] There is still, in this city, a view among some men that a girl walking across The Meadows at 2 o'clock in the morning, wearing a mini-skirt, is quotes "asking for it" close quotes. That is very wrong and that actually creates an atmosphere which tolerates attacks on women and I think it is part of our job to change that. (Conservative, self-defined feminist).

Furthermore women councillors, both feminist and non feminist, appear to be becoming increasingly convinced that their presence makes a difference in terms of the promotion of women's interests: 47 out of the 53 women interviewed (89%)

believed the campaign would not have happened, or it was unlikely to have happened without the presence of elected women members.

I doubt it - I can't see any man grasping that particular nettle. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

It would be light years away because lots of men wouldn't accept that there *is* violence. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

The concrete presence of women impacting upon political outcomes was discussed in terms of both the perception that women and men councillors generally accord a different priority to such issues and that men were complacent about the issue.

I don't mean that men would have been against it - but I don't think they would have thought of it, you know. Most of the men, once they've thought of it, are quite sympathetic to the idea - but I don't think they would have sat down and given it enough thought. They are quite often too involved in their own careers. (Labour, qualified feminist).

It would inevitably have become an issue, even if this was 100% male council - it would have been raised from some quarter - it might not have been followed up, that's what I can't answer. (Conservative, qualified feminist).

Some women did emphasise the support of male colleagues, particularly Labour and Liberal Democrat councillors; and the need to strike alliances with male councillors in order to shape policy when women are still present in such small numbers on councils.¹⁴ However, in general, the discussions point to a greater acceptance of the relevance of gender in politics than was argued by many women elsewhere in their interviews.

I think that women councillors do make an impact but you need to remember we only have 15 women councillors - so [...] I really don't want to take this down a male-female road because I don't think it is - I think it is who is supportive of the issue and who isn't... because I think what won it on our council was the number of men who spoke up on its behalf. (Labour, self-defined feminist)

¹⁴ There has been high profile male support for the Zero Tolerance campaign throughout Scotland on both organisational and individual bases. For example, The Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders Police and the Governor of Peterhead prison are among those who have been publicly supportive; and the support of council chief executives and service directors in some of the participating local authorities has contributed to the effective development and dissemination of the campaign. The original Edinburgh *Zero Tolerance* campaign was launched by an all-male platform (apart from the Convenor of the women's committee). However this was less a deliberate strategy of women's officers than a reflection of the predominant gender of high-ranking public figures.

The findings support suggestions from other studies that women politicians understand politics to be more inclusive, civic based and 'moral' than traditional conceptions (See Chapter 2). It also provides some empirical evidence to back the contention of many of the women interviewed that women 'do' politics differently. For instance in terms of crossing traditional boundaries. Several women, across party, saw *Zero Tolerance* as an issue where women politicians had worked together.

There's quite a strong consensus [...] People don't often cross that political divide to see that - but it has certainly come out in the *Zero Tolerance* campaign which has support on all sides and which has not been seen as something to say 'How dreadful, what a waste of tax-payers money' which is the usual thing. (Labour, self-defined feminist)

Secondly, evidence from this study both reinforces findings from other studies; and backs the claims of some of the women councillors that women politicians see community consultation as a preferred method of working. The campaign arose out of the concerns of women, expressed as part of a regular consultation exercise with women in the community, which was initiated by Edinburgh DC's women's committee. Convenor, Margaret McGregor argues that the presence of women councillors has been instrumental in promoting a gender agenda because they have insisted on consultative ways of working in which women's issues and concerns can be discussed, in which women have control over the agenda.¹⁵

I think that the presence of women councillors is crucial as well because I think the whole decision to have a consultation exercise has come from the women on the council, especially the Labour women. (Labour).

The case study reveals the importance of reasonably strong and integrated women's/ equal opportunities structures as both feminist agents of change, and also as sites or spaces where women politicians can develop common agendas. In the current study 49 out of 53 (93%) of the women councillors interviewed believed that the campaign would definitely not, or was unlikely to have happened without the existence of an equalities structure.

You need a structure in order to justify spending - in order to fight for spending in the first place! And, because budgets are tight, we are fighting hard for our

¹⁵ See similar discussion on women's preferred way of working by Aberdeen women's and equal opportunities committee convenor Margaret Smith in Section I of thesis (Chapter 2).

corner - so unless there was a structure there it [*Zero Tolerance*] wouldn't have happened - there's be no *place* it could actually fit in. (Labour, self-defined feminist)

This highlights a clear sense that women councillors, whether they support women's committees or not, see their strategic worth as 'space' in which women can set the political agenda. This reinforces similar discussions in Chapter 7. For example, one Scottish National councillor who had earlier discussed her reservations about the usefulness of women's committees argued - along with several other critics of the structures - that the *Zero Tolerance* campaign would not have got onto the agenda *without* the existence of such a structure.

I know I'm contradicting myself [...] but that's an example and a very good example of an area where something that has been raised there has been taken on through. (Scottish National, qualified feminist).

If we hadn't had a women's committee and we hadn't had people doing these jobs then there would have been no [campaign]. I mean the very fact that that environment was set up in which ideas like that could be developed was important. (Labour, self-defined feminist).

Conclusions: Towards Convergence - A women's agenda ?

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign reflected the shared values of feminists within the state and the women's movement. There was a shared definition of violence as an abuse of the power that men are accorded in present social structures. In evaluations and other research this naming of men and the analysis of violence as an abuse of power have proved the most challenging and controversial aspects of the campaign. There was a shared understanding of the links between all forms of violence and sexual coercion, for example domestic violence, child sex abuse and rape. There was also concern to 'name' emotional and psychological abuse as forms of violence and to place them along a continuum of violence.

Although Women's Aid, Rape Crisis and other women's support groups did not 'own' the campaign, their definition of the issue was shared by the women with power - the femocrats - within the policy community. Uniquely, the issue was not given to the politicians nor senior managers for definition or negotiation. The existence of a full time campaigns officer in the EDC Women's Unit meant that, in this instance, the policy community was the women's unit and women's movement

groups were 'insiders'. This was in marked contrast to the experience of women's groups in the run-up to the Scottish Office campaign where although they were included in the policy process, they were unable to shape the agenda. Furthermore the Scottish Office was able to flag their involvement in the working party as evidence of consultation and co-operation, despite their reservations about the campaign.¹⁶

Support for the *Zero Tolerance* campaign by Women's Aid, Rape Crisis and other women's support groups has remained largely firm, despite increased pressure on their services. They have been active and proactive in developing *Zero Tolerance* and have taken the lead in developing materials and organising seminars and conferences. This is in contrast to received wisdom that the women's movement's relationship with the state and women's initiatives within the state is likely to be characterised by ambivalence, suspicion and disappointment.

Loose alliances of women specialist officers, other women officers, women councillors, activists in the women's movement, the trade union movement, political parties and voluntary and public service sectors have been successful in raising an issue of common concern higher up the political agenda. They have also been instrumental in getting *Zero Tolerance* over any overt 'wobbles' and covert resistance. They have ensured the continued high profile of the campaign in Edinburgh and have, in different configurations, ensured that the campaign has been adopted and progressed by other authorities throughout Scotland (and Britain). *Zero Tolerance* campaigners have made male politicians and policy makers aware of the levels of concern by women in the community; and the campaign has reinvigorated the campaigning work of some of the women's advocacy groups.

Despite increased workloads and as yet little pay-off in the shape of increased resources, women's groups have taken a long term view that the *Zero Tolerance* campaign will provide them with leverage to press for adequate funding and has shifted the focus of public perception about the issue from one of social welfare to one of political concern. As such, the case study would suggest a convergence between the agendas of feminist activists and 'municipal' feminists.

¹⁶ Scottish Women's Aid Newsletter, Spring / Summer 1995)

Evidence from the study suggests that feminists may be gaining some leverage from their intervention in the state, through women's committees and women's units, to control and define certain issues. This underlines the importance of the creation and maintenance of reasonably strong and integrated women's or equal opportunities structures in order to provide both the space and the initiatives for promoting change, and suggests that women's committees can act as proactive agents of feminist change. The women's committee at Edinburgh was mature in terms of its structure, staffing, support and resources. It had learned lessons from the early history of women's initiatives particularly skills of political management and the construction of legitimacy via consultation with women in the community and autonomous women's groups. Indeed, all the participating authorities running *Zero Tolerance* have women's or equalities structures in place (although in one case, Strathclyde, it has only the status of an advisory group). In addition, all the participating authorities have had at least one specialist officer in post who has liaised through a *Zero Tolerance* officers' network, part of the established Scottish Women's and Equal Opportunities Officers' Forum (SWEOF).

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign was a feminist intervention in the local state; it was informed by feminist analysis and was devised and conceived in a structural space which allowed feminists as officers, politicians and women's movement groups to form and implement policy. In the case of the original Edinburgh campaign, it was largely officer driven; and the commitment of specialist officers and 'unofficial' feminists in service departments has been instrumental in the adoption and successful implementation of the campaign elsewhere. This activity has been supported and promoted by small numbers of feminist politicians; it was also political will by activists, some feminist, in the Labour Party which led to the creation of the structures in the first place.

However the *Zero Tolerance* campaign is also a case study of much more than that. Violence has emerged as an issue around which women politicians found common ground across party and between feminists and non feminists. As such, the *Zero Tolerance* campaign has acted as an interface between feminist interventions in the local state and women politicians *qua* women.

The massive support which characterised the *Zero Tolerance* campaign illustrates the salience of issue of violence for women in general and a possible diffusion of certain feminist values which has changed the social and political context in which violence against women is discussed. It would appear that feminism has been successful in revealing the political nature of so-called women's issues such as violence, and that many women politicians now share these newer definitions of what constitutes 'proper' politics. This is underlined by the findings of the current study where there was consensus amongst female politicians across party, generation and degree of gender consciousness that tackling such issues and taking a moral lead were a legitimate part of local government. It also underlines the significance of the presence of women in politics, both feminist and non feminist, for the articulation and promotion of women's concerns. The salience of the issue and the broad support for the campaign, together with certain configurations of factors: political and structural; resulted in women as individual or collective political actors working to promote or support an initiative of pressing concern both to women in the community and women's movement activists.

Women councillors made a difference in both direct and indirect ways. In general, women across party recognised the significance of the issue, and were prepared to accord it importance on their personal political agendas. The issue was seen as a matter of political concern, rather than solely an individual or legal matter, or one of social welfare. It was generally recognised that political and public discussion was needed to move the debate forward; they identified the need for political will to tackle the problem both in terms of raising awareness and, in many of the discussions, the need to increase resources.

The presence of women meant there was an impetus for action. The agenda-setting process built upon the changed social and political context in which the issues were raised, in which violence against women is less acceptable than it has traditionally been; and in which gender issues are seen as more legitimate. Women have been able to use the formal lip-service paid to these issues by parties and administrations to promote a campaign which has reinvigorated the debate about violence.

The case study strengthens the working hypothesis of women's groups that their best target for political action and support within local government is women councillors across party. This also backs the findings of a number of studies where

it is argued that the presence of women qua women, whether feminist or not, is one of the factors in the successful promotion of women's issues at local level.

Finally the evidence tentatively suggests the existence of an emerging 'women's politics', a broad-based woman's politics which crosses traditional boundaries and where women as women are successfully intervening in the local state and making a difference.

9 Conclusions: Getting there, being there, making a difference?

Introduction

This concluding chapter returns to the central aims and questions raised in the introduction to the thesis. The study focused upon two broad questions: why there are so few women in politics; and whether the (increased) presence of women makes a difference in terms of, for instance, political agenda or policy outcome. The chapter outlines the main findings of the thesis, and then discusses the implications of those findings for the broad themes which arise from the study. In particular, it discusses how female politicians' common sense discourses, together with recent feminist theoretical contributions, can form a challenge to existing political discourses around women's representation and political roles. It also assesses the implications of the case study findings for discussions on the nature and form of 'women's politics', and the further question of whether women *as women* make a difference to politics, or whether 'women's politics' is feminist politics mis-named.

The study sought to further our understanding of the relationship between gender relations, political structures and political action at two distinct, but inter-related, levels: firstly at the level of discourse; and secondly within a concrete context. Data were collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews with 53 female councillors across political party, in four Scottish local authorities. In addition, a case study was undertaken into a policy initiative common to the four authorities.

The study found that gender is relevant to women's experience as political actors. It intervenes in complex ways to shape and restrict their access, presence and agency in political life. Difference was a recurrent motif of the women's discussions; not only in terms of disadvantage but also as a distinctive resource.

Aims, questions and contentions

The thesis contended that there is a sense of closure within political discourses around women's political under-representation in the UK, which is caused, in part, by the limitations of dominant constructions of equality, representation and equal opportunities. This closure has contributed to the failure to make significant improvements in levels of representation at national level in the post-war period, in contrast to many other European countries. This contention was underscored by the collapse of the British Labour Party's positive action programme during the time of the study. The policy of all-women short lists in selected constituencies - aimed at significantly increasing the number of female MPs at the next general election - was successfully challenged by male aspirants using sex discrimination legislation. The thesis argued that new versions of political discourses were needed to reinvigorate the debate and to progress action; it suggested that the common sense discourses of women politicians were a potential site for the production of alternative discourses.

The thesis further contended that our understanding of women's political role had been limited by the dominant empirical approach in political science. The study has drawn upon parallel discussions developed within other disciplines in social sciences and the humanities; in addition to contemporary political debates around equality and difference, political identity, democracy, representation and citizenship. Feminist theories of justice and care were also examined. The study aimed to provide a bridge between different disciplines within the academy; and also to trace the links between theoretical and academic discussions, political discourse, feminist debate and the everyday theorising of women local politicians.

The study was qualitative and broad brush. It explored the issues through discourse and through contextual case study. Categories were kept fluid, analysis was thematic, and conclusions, therefore, are necessarily provisional and suggestive.

Section I used the narratives of councillors as a 'window' through which to explore the way in which women understand gender relations to shape and impede their access to political elites; and also explores the justifications they offered to promote the increased presence of women. The objective was to place these discourses within the context of contemporary theories and political debates about equality and

representation; and recent suggestions with regard to feminist political theories of care.

The case study of *Zero Tolerance*, an anti-violence public awareness campaign, was explored in Section II. The feminist campaign, initiated and developed by Scottish local governments was an ideal site to explore the theoretical expectation of certain feminist models that the feminisation of political elites (in terms of the increased numerical presence) will lead to the greater promotion of positive policies for women; an expectation which resonates with the perceptions of many women interviewed. It also allowed examination of the hypothesis that there are structural factors which may inhibit or enable the development, expression and active pursuit of gendered politics.

The findings: representation, barriers and measures

Women forwarded multiple justifications for the increased access of women into decision-making bodies, including the assertion that women make a difference *qua* women. Representation held complex and contested meanings for women councillors in this study; some women saw themselves as representing women in terms of their *symbolic* presence in political elites, as a role model on an individual level to individual women; and as a challenge to the traditional view that politics is no place for a woman. Others saw themselves representing women *qua* women in terms of interests and agendas - a substantive presence and influence. Indeed most women councillors in the current study believe that they in some sense both 'stand for' and 'act for' women. Women use notions of equality, parity and fairness to promote their claim for an equal presence in the polity *and* also notions of difference.

Women councillors were clear that the barriers to equal participation in politics were gendered, and perceived them as rooted in the sexual division of labour. They described and discussed a series of constraints which interconnect, and which serve to both inhibit potential aspirants at party and candidate level, and also disadvantage women as political players once they are within the system. The interlocking triangle of domestic responsibilities, time poverty and under confidence was identified by the majority of women in the study as the major constraint preventing women from full and fair participation in public life. The

unequal domestic and caring burden of women is often characterised as a truism, but it is a fundamental force which impedes, restricts and shapes women's entry and presence in both the worlds of work and of politics. There was also recognition that the unequal sexual division of labour was inextricably linked to men's resistance as political players, as social actors and as partners to give up some of their power. These understandings reveal the flaws in models of recruitment which tend to posit supply and demand factors as separable for analysis; instead the interviews portray a picture of multiple and multi-layered inter-connections.

Discussion of possible measures to improve the proportion of women in national and local politics takes place within a political and organisational framework which privileges formal equality, and which minimises the concrete reality of gendered lives. Women councillors' gendered realities exposed the limitations of dominant constructions of equal opportunities and 'fairness' which have, to date, failed to deliver significant improvements in levels of women's political representation, particularly at Westminster. However their discourses were contradictory : although there was recognition of women's unequal access to power; there was also acceptance of the legitimacy of dominant constructions of justice and equality which stress sameness not difference.

There was broad agreement about many practical measures to tackle the under-representation of women: most notably encouragement, training, child care and, in the case of local politics, councillor salaries. In addition, women argued for changes in working hours and conditions, particularly at Westminster, and the establishment of a Scottish parliament. Many women councillors expressed a preference for what Cockburn has termed the long agenda project of transformatory change, involving societal change and the reformation of politics, but there were considerable difficulties in constructing acceptable strategies for change. There was a sense of closure in many of the discussions, emanating from a distaste for 'unfair privileges'. However women did challenge existing political criteria and constructions of merit, and argued that women brought distinctive values and skills to politics.

There were striking parallels between the *common sense* theorising of women local politicians and the practical insights of feminist theorists of justice (Moller Okin); maternal thinking (Ruddick) and care as a political ethic (Tronto). The study suggests that careful and selective use of some of these common insights could be

used to promote re-invigorated discourses and political campaigning around women's more equal representation.

Case study findings

In Section II of the thesis, several themes relating to women's presence and agency in politics were examined within a concrete setting. The study highlighted the complex relationship between women politicians, feminism and the women's movement. The majority of women councillors felt a sense of connection with other women and would seem to perceive themselves as part of a loose collectivity called the 'women's movement'. However many women expressed unease at what they perceived to be the extreme characteristics of feminist strategy; in much the same way as they rejected 'male' political tactics of confrontation.

Equal opportunities and feminism, once synonymous, appear to have become partially 'uncoupled'. Although women councillors do not generally identify themselves as feminist, many call themselves 'pro-equality', and do act as agents or supporters of change. All but a few women can be placed along a continuum of gender consciousness and commitment. This continuum ranges from 'weak' political identification, to the energetic promotion of women's interests by committed agents of change.

Most women emphasised that their main concern was for their whole community, few women perceived themselves as primarily champions for women. Political party was also a major source of identification for most women. However there were 'divided loyalties'. Women councillors from different political parties showed high levels of awareness of women's groups and women's issues, and support for equal opportunities work. There was also support, although sometimes critical, for the work of women's and equal opportunities committees. There was a general perception that women councillors were more supportive of 'women's' and 'equality issues' than male councillors. This indicates a greater sense of cross-party acceptance of gender issues as legitimate within local government than has generally been argued.

The thesis examined suggestions that there are certain factors, including structural factors which may inhibit or enable the development, expression and active pursuit

of 'women's' politics. Inhibiting conditions identified in the study included the present political structures; party discipline; and the perceived political 'cost' of supporting gender policies, factors also highlighted in studies elsewhere. However the relatively small proportions of women in the authorities studied appeared less significant than predicted by the *critical mass* model. Instead a more complex picture emerged where the expression of gender consciousness, through political agenda setting and the effective implementation of equalities initiatives, was linked to a combination of certain enabling factors and conditions. At a personal level, the experience of separate sex social or political groupings; or mutual support networks within local authorities was highlighted as important in raising women's gender consciousness. At a structural level, the existence of women's networks, formal and informal; and the existence of women's or equalities structures within local authorities were found to be significant in providing both the organisational space and the political space in which to initiate change. All authorities studied had equalities structures in place, staffed by specialist officers.

Zero Tolerance was a strong campaign initiated by feminist specialist officers and dedicated feminist councillors which found broad support from women councillors, feminist and non-feminist, across party. Although support was not unqualified nor uncritical, it was unprecedented in the experience of local government gender politics; and was crucial to the success of the campaign. This indicates both the personal and political salience of the issue for the women councillors themselves, and also a recognition of its significance to women in the community. It would appear that feminism has been successful in revealing the political nature of so-called 'women's issues' such as violence, and that many women politicians now share these newer definitions of what constitutes 'proper' politics. This is underlined by the findings of the current study where there was cross-party consensus amongst female politicians that tackling such issues, and taking a moral lead were a legitimate part of local government.

Women's politics and feminist politics in context

The case study also provides empirical evidence to back claims that the presence of women in politics, both feminist and non feminist, is necessary for the articulation and promotion of women's concerns. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is a case of feminist-defined policy successfully translated into practice. As a clear case of a

feminist intervention in the local state it is of great interest. However it also fits within a wider framework, as an interface between feminist action, public policy and a more diffuse gendered politics.

The question was earlier posed as to whether women share common interests as political actors - or are common goals and concerns shared only by feminists within the system? Do women *qua* women make a difference - or are manifestations of 'women's politics' merely feminist politics mis-named? The findings from this study are tentative, however it would appear that women *as* women share certain distinctive political features which can be loosely construed as 'women's politics'. Considerable difficulties exist around the use of feminism as an indicator for 'women's politics'. Although similar perspectives arise from women's common experiences, the relationship between women's politics and feminist politics is complex and the terms are not interchangeable. Feminist politics would appear to be more focused, more strategic and more ideological; women's politics in comparison, more ambiguous and provisional. Women have divided loyalties, and often have other priorities. Manifestations of 'women's politics' in action are based upon shifting solidarities around specific issues.

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign shows there is a need for key agents of change - femocrats and dedicated feminist councillors; and for enabling structural contexts, particularly a 'space' in which gender politics can be developed and initiated. Strategically however, feminists can expect support from other women councillors on a range of gender issues, although there may be disagreements and divisions.

The councillors in the study were neither Queen Bees, who perceive gender to be irrelevant and to feel no connection with other women; nor were they uncritical Sisters. Rather, I have suggested they may instead be characterised as Neighbours. They all have at a least a 'weak' gender identification - which under certain conditions may result in gender outcomes, as in the case of *Zero Tolerance*. Most women politicians feel they to some degree both 'act for' and 'stand for' women in the community, they feel a connection with women seeking access to political elites, as aspirant candidates, as women's advocacy groups and as women in the community seeking help. They also sustain each other through informal support networks. These discussions are suggestive of a 'politics of connectedness'.

Many women believed that the increased presence of women had a transformatory potential. There was a perception that women are different in terms of 'doing politics' and that they will make a difference to the outcome of politics by bringing their own perspective, policy concerns and values. This was a recurrent theme, although it also existed alongside equality discourses, which asserted that women were 'as good as' men, and which minimised the political relevance of gender.

The thesis concludes that gender intervenes in a complex, sometimes contradictory way in women's access, presence and action in political elites. At a minimal level, almost all women acknowledge the political relevance of gender. They invoke the rhetoric of difference when discussing barriers to access and when justifying the inclusion of women in political elites; and at empirical level there is evidence to back their contention that they make a difference. In the case study this took the form of an emerging 'women's politics', a broad-based coalition which crossed traditional boundaries, and where women as women were successful at intervening in the local state and making a difference. These findings indicate that in terms of political discourse, it would make sense for feminists to make greater strategic use of the argument that we need more women in politics because they do make a difference.

New political discourses of justice, merit and care

There has been a reluctance to invoke difference or 'women's distinctive contribution' by feminist political scientists, and indeed some women politicians, because of the potential these arguments have to be used by reactionaries to reinforce stereotypes about women's role. Therefore, at present, the only legitimising discourse for increasing the number of women in politics in Britain is one of 'justice' or 'proportionality'.

Present strategies have not served women well in their campaign for equal presence in the polity in Britain, and have resulted in problems of legitimacy over the introduction and implementation of special measures, such as quotas and all-women short lists. In contrast Scandinavian countries, notably Norway, have used multi-valued justifications which invoke both equality (justice) and difference (interests and resources). The acceptance of a 'credo of difference' has legitimised the implementation of quotas, and has resulted in the proportion of women politicians

rising to a norm of between 30 and 40 per cent. The Norwegian case would seem to offer strategic attractions; and the addition of discourses around difference, presented in an accessible way, have positive potential to 'free up' discussion, and action, around women's representation in Britain. It is clear from the current study, and also empirical findings in many other countries, that the discourses of difference resonate strongly with the perceptions and experiences of women politicians. Women politicians already call upon a much wider range of reasonings and justifications than those of justice and proportionality; however, at present, these *common sense* alternatives lack legitimacy.

There is a need to integrate arguments of justice and difference, and to draw on the insights of feminist justice and care theorists in order to imbue what appear to be commonplace barriers to women's progress - in particular the issue of women's caring responsibilities - with political urgency and moral legitimacy.

Several possible 'difference' challenges to dominant ideology emerge from the synthesis of feminist theorists and the common sense of women politicians; which may act to make the needs of equality more transparent. They can be described as 'just' discourses, which take the moral high ground; 'criteria' discourses, which are pragmatic and challenge existing constructions of political merit; and 'long agenda' discourses which challenge existing political paradigms and contain the potential for transformatory change.

To reconceptualise the unequal distribution of power in politics and the sexual division of labour as a 'justice crisis' would change the focus from women's need for 'special treatment', and instead would problematise male behaviour and existing structures. Formal justice and political rules of the game emphasise procedural fairness and do not require that needs be addressed nor adequacy of solutions assessed. A new understanding of justice would potentially free up debates, particularly for those women who want change but are opposed to 'special treatment' or particularist mechanisms.

In particular, Tronto's 'vocabulary of care' is a critical and strategic tool. If introduced and rehearsed, it would build upon women's common sense analysis and further expose the uneven distribution of power in society. It would identify male politicians and party officials - as well as men in general - as *care demanders*

exercising *privileged irresponsibility*. As such, this discourse could act as a catalyst to women's political mobilisation.

The challenge to gendered constructs of criteria developed in organisational studies may offer a bridge between the discourses of equality and difference. This challenge has both short agenda pragmatic possibilities as well as the potential for long agenda transformatory change. This challenge also emerges from the discussions of the feminist theorists examined; and from the common sense of women politicians.

Although sometimes couched in terms of 'what women know', rather than a sense of legitimate political discourse, nevertheless women politicians do use notions of *difference* to challenge hegemonic male values. In particular many women saw their experience of care-giving and their ability to juggle competing roles and demands as valuable political resources both in terms of policy making and as general competencies which deserve recognition. Women also argued that the relative absence of women in politics and the law accounted for many of the deficiencies apparent in social policy and judicial workings.

There is clear evidence that women's lived experience in managing the contradictory aspects of their lives as women, mothers, wives, workers and politicians has given rise to embryonic analyses, explanatory frameworks, and blueprints for political change within their common sense. It also suggests that women position care as a central political idea, and see its transformatory potential. Their discussions of politics, representation and power contain a challenge and a potential to subvert dominant constructions of political criteria, and privileged power forms by advancing alternative models based on women's experience, values and a nascent political ethic of care.

This emerging argument in both the literature and in the interviews could arguably be developed into a challenge which questions the competence of politicians and other decision-makers (mostly men) who have little or no experience of hands-on caring. If caring was recognised as a central practice and core value of political and social life, then caring work would seem an essential 'life experience' and those divorced from care would seem deficient in their ability to make political decisions based on complex judgements about competing needs. Furthermore women and

minorities would appear more competent, better rehearsed in the practices and thinking required for exercising political power. In the interviews this is expressed in terms that women make better politicians because they have a 'more rounded view of life' or because 'women have other lives outside of the council'.

There is opportunity for an 'opening out' and a moving forward in the representation debate by extrapolating from the discourses of justice, difference and care. For example, if Tronto's concept of integrity of practice were to be applied to the problem of access to power, then political systems would be exposed as lacking *integrity of practice*. Politics would, thus, have to be radically restructured in order to 'fit in' with caring lives, and reflect the concerns of a society which placed care at its core whilst also enabling all its citizens to combine care with other human activities.

Strategies

Striking optimism was expressed by women councillors about the proposed Scottish Parliament and the role women could play. The Scottish Parliament was seen by many women as a long agenda measure, which held the promise of a new politics. It is within the context of debates around the Scottish Parliament that women have begun rehearsing arguments of difference. The belief that women will 'make a difference' has been instrumental in mobilising large numbers of women politicians, party activists and women's groups in Scotland to campaign for gender equality and women friendly practices in a new Scottish Parliament. This credo of difference is gaining some ground amongst women in Scotland, but it remains untheorised, which in some cases can tend towards an uncritical celebration of 'womanly virtues'. Neither has it substantially challenged mainstream political discourse.

It is important not to over-draw nor over claim difference. It is a contested notion in the discourse of women politicians in the study. 'Women's politics' in action are not permanent or fixed, but shifting and provisional. Difference however suggests a strategic potentiality, and a basis from which feminists can work with other women to promote more women into political elites; and form solidarities within politics to effect positive change.

The thesis does not propose that feminist and other women activists 'ditch' the arguments of justice and equality. Rather it suggests that multi-valued justificatory strategies should be used, which reflect the complexity of common sense discourse; and which draw upon both the pragmatic experience of Norwegian campaigners; and the strategic insights of difference theorists. This involves giving attention to the political relevance of gender, as both a disadvantage and as a distinctive resource; and giving recognition to the political value of care. New discourses do not, of course, necessarily equal action. However the careful and selective use of some of the insights from these debates can promote re-invigorated discourses for women's representation. And eventual action is contingent upon having the necessary vocabulary to justify and legitimise women's political participation at both ideological and practical levels.

APPENDIX A

Semi - structured interview schedule Study of Scottish women councillors 1994-1995

BACKGROUND

Age/d.o.b. marital status number & age of children
employment history education/ age left f/time education
highest educational qualification

A. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Party when joined/why?
Positions held
Have you ever supported or been active in another party?

Date elected to council first stood? why/details
Who would you say gave you support/encouragement?
What would you say was your main political aim when you stood/change over time?
which group or groups in society do you feel you wholly or mainly represent?

Political family

Y/N details

experience of politics? pressure groups, community groups, health, single issues?
Y/N

Experience of single sex social or political groups (prompt : e.g. WI, women's health groups, feminist groups) Y N

feminist family background? Y/N
female role models? Y/N

Discrimination in political career Y/N
selection since being elected
couns(own party) couns (other parties)

officers

discrimination work/personal life Y/N

B. WOMEN IN POLITICS

[ALL] DO YOU THINK THERE SHOULD BE MORE WOMEN IN POLITICS? Y/N

WHY/ WHY NOT?

Why are there so few women in politics?

Measures : what measures do you think would increase the number of women in politics?

(for example)

quotas/positive action

training

encouragement

child care /provision

child care/allowances

child care tax relief

coun salaries

working hours

political culture

other

Do you feel a responsibility to encourage women into politics?

Views on women's sections in political parties

[ALL] Do you agree with this statement? Women in politics behave differently to men?

[Hedlund, 1988]

YES

NO

OTHER

[ALL] Do you agree with the view that women politicians represent the interests of women constituents better than male politicians? [Hedlund, 1988]

YES

NO

OTHER

[ALL] Can you tell me : do any of your aims - those you have mentioned already or any others you may have have any particular relevance to women?

[Chapman, 1987, 1987]

YES

NO

OTHER

[ALL] Can you identify for me groups of women in the population who have special needs or are in particular need of help or political change in any way?

[Chapman, 1987, 1987]

C. WOMEN'S ISSUES

What are your main fields of interest in politics ?

Are there specific areas of special interest to women politicians?

what do you consider to be women's issues?

(Examples)

child care	representation	housing
health	violence/safety	women as council clients
environment	other	

IMPORTANCE: - What importance do you think you place on women's issues?

what importance - male politicians/ own party? other parties
 other female politicians
 officers

D. WOMEN'S COMMITTEES

What are your views about women's committees - at outset? now? change?

[discuss pros/cons of type of equalities structure - and preferences]

E. ZERO TOLERANCE

[preamble if necessary]

How did it get onto political agenda?

Own involvement / own party involvement?

reactions - self members m + f own party other couns

good/bad points of campaign?

scale of problem (of violence against women and children)?

Has ZT changed your views / raised your awareness

CAUSES of male violence?

Is ZT a legitimate function of local authority ?

would ZT have happened without women councillors?

- without the structure of women's cmte/ equal opps cmte?

F. POLICY AND GENDER

Can you identify any policy change or outcome benefiting women which you/ your women colleagues have been instrumental in achieving?

Can you tell me any occasions when you think women councillors have acted together to either promote, change or block policy? (either women within party groups? / cross party alliances?)

NUMBERS - Do you think the number of women councillors makes a difference? more the better / the right kind? / changes in culture/ solidarity?

Edwina Curry once said: 'I am not a woman, I am a Conservative'

How important is it to you that you are a woman politician, and how importance is it to you that you are a party politician How would you express that division, if any, as a % ?

G. FEMINISM / WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

[ALL] **Would you describe yourself as a feminist ?**

how would you define feminism ?

(Why are you / many women reluctant to use label feminist?)

There is a women's movement in Britain and the Western world generally - not a very structured movement , but it does exist - do you feel the existence of this movement has had any impact on your life ; either directly, or indirectly through the society in which you live?[Chapman, 1986,1987]

Would you consider yourself to be a member of the women's movement?

(alternate question: how does the position of women in society today compare with that thirty or forty years ago/ do you see a difference between yourself / mothers generation/ daughters generation)

[ADDED TO INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AT LATER STAGE]

How would you define femininity? Is femininity an important idea for you ?

Do you see there being a conflict between being a feminist and being feminine?

H. WESTMINSTER /SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Have you been involved at all in the debate over gender equality in the proposed Scottish Parliament?

Would you say you were interested in standing for Westminster ? (any previous attempts?)

Would you say you were interested in standing for any Scottish Parliament that might be formed?

I. ANONYMOUS QUESTION ON EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE

(Preamble: I am now going to ask a highly personal question. Please feel free not to answer. If you do decide to answer, your answers will be treated as anonymous. As you will remember we spoke a moment ago about the Zero Tolerance campaign, and the issues of violence more generally. One of the difficulties is that no-one knows the true scale of violence. When I was conducting my pilot, I was struck at the number of women councillors who brought up their personal experiences of violence as relevant. I therefore decided I would include this question , which is :) Can you tell me if you have ever experienced violence, sexual violence or sexual abuse ? (IF NO) - have you ever experienced anything you would call sexual harassment?

AND FINALLY, if you had been around in the late 19th and early 20th Century, do you think you would have been involved in the struggle for the vote for women?

(IF YES) Do you think you would have most likely been a SUFFRAGIST who relied upon lobbying etc. or a MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE ... and taken direct action ?... Do you think you would have chained yourself to the railings !!!!!

Pilot study

A series of pilot interviews were carried out in February 1994 with four Labour, one Liberal Democrat and one Conservative councillor on district authorities in both the West and East of Scotland. The interviews were designed mainly to test the themes of the interview schedule. The interviewees included a fiercely anti-feminist councillor of some reputation - which although an alarming experience allowed me to test various ways of exploring issues without asking "red button" questions. Feedback was requested at the end of each interview. As a result of this, one section (on the impact of media on political information) was dropped and several other questions re-worded for greater clarity. The pilot interviewees included a Labour council leader; chair of a newly created women's committee; a housing convenor and three backbenchers (one Labour, one Liberal Democrat and one Conservative). Some attempt was made at variety, but the pilot group was not intended to be a representative sample.

Main Study

The main interviewing began in March 1994 and lasted around 11 months. The fieldwork straddled the Regional Elections in 1994 and was overshadowed by the sudden death of Labour leader John Smith and the subsequent by-election. Local Government reorganisation was also a pressing pre-occupation.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted and taped. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim (where possible); This qualitative data were partially coded and entered into a data-base using StatView. Some quantitative data (frequencies and some cross-tabulations) were produced which provide useful benchmarks. However, because codings were based upon interpretation, albeit careful, of complex and nuanced material they must be treated as impressionistic.

All women councillors serving on four selected authorities were contacted and asked to participate. In total 53 interviews were carried out, these comprised of 49 out of the 51 female councillors currently serving on Strathclyde and Tayside Regions and Aberdeen and Edinburgh Districts (post 94-Regional Elections); together with interviews with one Conservative and three Labour Regional councillors who were serving before the 1994 Regional Elections. Briefing sessions were also held with other key informants, including women's and equal opportunities unit officers, advocacy group workers, together with selected party informants.

In total 8 Conservatives 5 SNP, 11 Liberal Democrats and 29 Labour women were interviewed in the main study. The study interviewed two council leaders (Edinburgh District and (then acting) Aberdeen) and one civic leader (before her election at Tayside); and three opposition group leaders.

Break-Down of Interviews by Authority

A: Strathclyde Region : There are 13 women councillors on Strathclyde Region, 12.5% elected members, which is the lowest proportion of the four authorities studied. The party break-down is: eleven Labour women (13%) one Liberal Democrat (17%) and one SNP (14%). Strathclyde Council is effectively a one-party authority with Labour councillors making up 83% of elected members, there is little role for effective opposition. Labour retained its predominance after the 1994 Regional elections.

Interviews were carried out with 11 of the 13 councillors current after May 1994. Two of the Strathclyde RC councillors refused to give interviews, both Labour members. They were also the two female members of Strathclyde's Labour executive. Soundings were taken as to the political stance and policy interests of the two missing cases and this will be discussed elsewhere. In addition the Region's sole Conservative woman (who served 1990-94) was interviewed shortly before she lost her seat. She was later elected in the 1995 Shadow elections to the new unitary Glasgow council as only one of three successful Conservative councillors. A longstanding Labour councillor who had set up the women's advisory committee on the council was interviewed before standing down and again some months later. Data from her interviews can be found in both the interviews substantive and as a key informant.

B:Tayside Region: There are eight women currently serving on Tayside Regional Council, 17% of elected members. These figures remained unchanged in the May 1994 elections. In May 1994 control of the council transferred from a (minority) Labour administration (1986-1994) to a (minority) SNP administration. A woman SNP councillor is now civic leader of the council, a second SNP woman was elected as group leader but resigned shortly after the election for personal reasons and her place was taken by a male colleague. All eight serving women councillors were interviewed. Four were interviewed before the May elections and three new councillors together with one continuing councillor were interviewed after the elections. In addition two Labour women councillors who stood down in May 1994 were interviewed. They were both previous convenors of the Equal Opportunities Committee. In addition the EO convenor (1992-1994), a male councillor, was interviewed as a key informant. In total 10 women councillors were interviewed: four Labour; four SNP; one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat.

C: Aberdeen District : All 14 female councillors were interviewed. This breaks down into: 6 Labour women who make up 22% of the ruling group, 2 Conservatives and 6 Liberal Democrats (46% of their group). During the fieldwork period one of the Labour women became Leader of the Council, a woman leads the Liberal Democrat group; and the authority also appointed a female Chief Executive.

D: Edinburgh District: There are 15 women councillors at Edinburgh District , 24% of the council and almost a third (27%) of the Labour (minority) ruling group. All 15 councillors were interviewed. The party breakdown is: 8 Labour; 4 Conservative and 3 Lib Dems. There are no female SNP councillors on EDC. At the time of fieldwork there were woman leaders of both the Labour administration and the opposition Conservative group. Edinburgh has the greatest absolute number of women councillors out of the four selected authorities.

Table B.1 : Breakdown of women councillors by authority/party grouping

	Aberdeen		Edinburgh		Tayside (post 94)		Strathclyde (post 94)	
Total no. councillors	52		62		46		104***	
Total no.women (%)	14	(27%)	15	(24%)	8 *	(17%)	13	(12.5%)
Lab total	27		30		16		86	
Lab women (%)	6	(22%)	8	(27%)	2	(12.5%)	11	(13%)
Con. total	10		23		4		3	
Con. women (%)	2	(20%)	4	(17%)	1	(25%)	0	(0%)
Lib. Dem. total	13		7		2		6	
Lib. Dem.women (%)	6	(46%)	3	(43%)	1	(50%)	1	(17%)
SNP total	2		2		22		7	
SNP women (%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	4**	(18%)	1	(14%)

* immediately post election

** immediately post election

*** total includes 2 Independents (both male)

Some Characteristics of Councillors

Age:

The women varied in age between 30 and 70 plus: 13 women were aged 40 or under; 19 women were aged between 41 and 50; 14 women were aged between 51 and 60; and 7 women were aged over 60 years.

Marital Status:

70 % of the women members are married, 17% are separated or divorced and 4 per cent widowed. Only nine per cent (5) have never married. This roughly equates with marriage rates in the standard population..

Children:

Thirteen per cent have never had children, (compared with 9% in Wilford's 1993 study of Northern Ireland Councillors; and general population rates of about 15%). 87% have had children - and all but 17% have had dependent children at some stage of their political career. In addition 9% (5) have other care commitments in the form of elderly parents, grandchildren etc. Some 28 % are currently caring for at least one dependent child and 7.5% have teenaged children; a further 34% had young or

teenaged children at some stage of their time on the council. Many commented on the difficulties of combining children and elected politics.

Occupation:

Around two thirds of the councillors are employed, or have been employed, in traditionally female "pink-collar" jobs and professions: of these 23% have been in female professions, mostly teachers; 15 per cent in skilled female jobs, mostly administration, and 21 % in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs in the cleansing and retail sectors.

Around 25 per cent of the councillors work full-time in addition to their council duties; a further 21 per cent do some form of part-time paid work in addition. 54 % of councillors do no paid work, this divides up (by self-definition) into 7.5% housewives, 4 % (2) unemployed (though more may be registered) 4 % (2) retired and 39% classing themselves as full-time councillors.

Educational Qualifications:

The largest group of councillors, around a third, has degrees, teacher training or diplomas (such as CQSW); a further 21 per cent had post-school trade or technical qualifications in subject such as hairdressing, book-keeping, public administration etc; 19% left school with a school-leavers certificate or O grades and a further 13 % left with Highers (or equivalent). Fifteen percent have post graduate qualifications such as PhDs, and medical and legal qualifications. Almost a quarter of the women (23%) have returned to training or education as adults, often when their children started school.

Length of Service:

Length of service has been calculated up to the shadow elections (April 95) except in the cases of interviewees who left elected politics in May 94. The women's councillors length of service varied from one year(7) to 24 years (1) with most clustered in the 1.5 terms (6 years) to 2.5 terms (10 years) range. Of the 94 newcomers 3:7 were existing district councillors and one had been a district councillor recently. In total 5/53 serve on both a Regional and a District Council. All are from the SNP or the Liberal Democrats. In addition another three councillors have had previous local authority experience.

Political Backgrounds.

Political Families:

The councillors were all asked questions about their political backgrounds, in particular whether they had come from 'political families' following Budge et al (1972) and Barron et al. (1991). In the current study 24% of women councillors came from politically active families (party members, party activists, trade union officials or activists), whilst a further 43% came from politically interested families where, parents were active citizens, or where current affairs and politics were discussed in the family home.

Table B.2: Degree of political activism or political interest in councillors' childhood homes.

Active	Interested	Not really	No
24%	43%	12 %	21%

Two thirds (66%) of the spouses or ex-spouses of the interviewees were politically active, or themselves came from political families. In addition 15% of the group reported their partners or ex-partners are or had been councillors and, in one case was a current Member of Parliament. It was noticeable in the interviews that several women spoke about becoming interested in politics through their partners.

Pilot study

A series of pilot interviews were carried out in February 1994 with four Labour, one Liberal Democrat and one Conservative councillor on district authorities in both the West and East of Scotland. The interviews were designed mainly to test the themes of the interview schedule. The interviewees included a fiercely anti-feminist councillor of some reputation - which although an alarming experience allowed me to test various ways of exploring issues without asking "red button" questions. Feedback was requested at the end of each interview. As a result of this, one section (on the impact of media on political information) was dropped and several other questions reworded for greater clarity. The pilot interviewees included a Labour council leader; chair of a newly created women's committee; a housing convenor and three backbenchers (one Labour, one Liberal Democrat and one Conservative). Some attempt was made at variety, but the pilot group was not intended to be a representative sample.

Main Study

The main interviewing began in March 1994 and lasted around 11 months. The fieldwork straddled the Regional Elections in 1994 and was overshadowed by the sudden death of Labour leader John Smith and the subsequent by-election. Local Government reorganisation was also a pressing pre-occupation.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted and taped. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim (where possible); This qualitative data were partially coded and entered into a data-base using StatView. Some quantitative data (frequencies and some cross-tabulations) were produced which provide useful benchmarks. However, because codings were based upon interpretation, albeit careful, of complex and nuanced material they must be treated as impressionistic.

All women councillors serving on four selected authorities were contacted and asked to participate. In total 53 interviews were carried out, these comprised of 49 out of the 51 female councillors currently serving on Strathclyde and Tayside Regions and Aberdeen and Edinburgh Districts (post 94-Regional Elections); together with interviews with one Conservative and three Labour Regional councillors who were serving before the 1994 Regional Elections. Briefing sessions were also held with other key informants, including women's and equal opportunities unit officers, advocacy group workers, together with selected party informants.

In total 8 Conservatives 5 SNP, 11 Liberal Democrats and 29 Labour women were interviewed in the main study. The study interviewed two council leaders (Edinburgh District and (then acting) Aberdeen) and one civic leader (before her election at Tayside); and three opposition group leaders.

Break-Down of Interviews by Authority

A: Strathclyde Region : There are 13 women councillors on Strathclyde Region, 12.5% elected members, which is the lowest proportion of the four authorities studied. The party break-down is: eleven Labour women (13%) one Liberal Democrat (17%) and one SNP (14%). Strathclyde Council is effectively a one-party authority with Labour councillors making up 83% of elected members, there is little role for effective opposition. Labour retained its predominance after the 1994 Regional elections.

Interviews were carried out with 11 of the 13 councillors current after May 1994. Two of the Strathclyde RC councillors refused to give interviews, both Labour members. They were also the two female members of Strathclyde's Labour executive. Soundings were taken as to the political stance and policy interests of the two missing cases and this will be discussed elsewhere. In addition the Region's sole Conservative woman (who served 1990-94) was interviewed shortly before she lost her seat. She was later elected in the 1995 Shadow elections to the new unitary Glasgow council as only one of three successful Conservative councillors. A longstanding Labour councillor who had set up the women's advisory committee on the council was interviewed before standing down and again some months later. Data from her interviews can be found in both the interviews substantive and as a key informant.

B:Tayside Region: There are eight women currently serving on Tayside Regional Council, 17% of elected members. These figures remained unchanged in the May 1994 elections. In May 1994 control of the council transferred from a (minority) Labour administration (1986-1994) to a (minority) SNP administration. A woman SNP councillor is now civic leader of the council, a second SNP woman was elected as group leader but resigned shortly after the election for personal reasons and her place was taken by a male colleague. All eight serving women councillors were interviewed. Four were interviewed before the May elections and three new councillors together with one continuing councillor were interviewed after the elections. In addition two Labour women councillors who stood down in May 1994 were interviewed. They were both previous convenors of the Equal Opportunities Committee. In addition the EO convenor (1992-1994), a male councillor, was interviewed as a key informant. In total 10 women councillors were interviewed: four Labour; four SNP; one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat.

C: Aberdeen District : All 14 female councillors were interviewed. This breaks down into: 6 Labour women who make up 22% of the ruling group, 2 Conservatives and 6 Liberal Democrats (46% of their group). During the fieldwork period one of the Labour women became Leader of the Council, a woman leads the Liberal Democrat group; and the authority also appointed a female Chief Executive.

D: Edinburgh District: There are 15 women councillors at Edinburgh District , 24% of the council and almost a third (27%) of the Labour (minority) ruling group. All 15 councillors were interviewed. The party breakdown is: 8 Labour; 4 Conservative and 3 Lib Dems. There are no female SNP councillors on EDC. At the time of fieldwork there were woman leaders of both the Labour administration and the opposition Conservative group. Edinburgh has the greatest absolute number of women councillors out of the four selected authorities.

Table B.1 : Breakdown of women councillors by authority/party grouping

	Aberdeen		Edinburgh		Tayside (post 94)		Strathclyde (post 94)	
Total no. councillors	52		62		46		104***	
Total no.women (%)	14	(27%)	15	(24%)	8 *	(17%)	13	(12.5%)
Lab total	27		30		16		86	
Lab women (%)	6	(22%)	8	(27%)	2	(12.5%)	11	(13%)
Con. total	10		23		4		3	
Con. women (%)	2	(20%)	4	(17%)	1	(25%)	0	(0%)
Lib. Dem. total	13		7		2		6	
Lib. Dem.women (%)	6	(46%)	3	(43%)	1	(50%)	1	(17%)
SNP total	2		2		22		7	
SNP women (%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	4**	(18%)	1	(14%)

* immediately post election

** immediately post election

*** total includes 2 Independents (both male)

Some Characteristics of Councillors

Age:

The women varied in age between 30 and 70 plus: 13 women were aged 40 or under; 19 women were aged between 41 and 50; 14 women were aged between 51 and 60; and 7 women were aged over 60 years.

Marital Status:

70 % of the women members are married, 17% are separated or divorced and 4 per cent widowed. Only nine per cent (5) have never married. This roughly equates with marriage rates in the standard population..

Children:

Thirteen per cent have never had children, (compared with 9% in Wilford's 1993 study of Northern Ireland Councillors; and general population rates of about 15%). 87% have had children - and all but 17% have had dependent children at some stage of their political career. In addition 9% (5) have other care commitments in the form of elderly parents, grandchildren etc. Some 28 % are currently caring for at least one dependent child and 7.5% have teenaged children; a further 34% had young or

teenaged children at some stage of their time on the council. Many commented on the difficulties of combining children and elected politics.

Occupation:

Around two thirds of the councillors are employed, or have been employed, in traditionally female "pink-collar" jobs and professions: of these 23% have been in female professions, mostly teachers; 15 per cent in skilled female jobs, mostly administration, and 21 % in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs in the cleansing and retail sectors.

Around 25 per cent of the councillors work full-time in addition to their council duties; a further 21 per cent do some form of part-time paid work in addition. 54 % of councillors do no paid work, this divides up (by self-definition) into 7.5% housewives, 4 % (2) unemployed (though more may be registered) 4 % (2) retired and 39% classing themselves as full-time councillors.

Educational Qualifications:

The largest group of councillors, around a third, has degrees, teacher training or diplomas (such as CQSW); a further 21 per cent had post-school trade or technical qualifications in subject such as hairdressing, book-keeping, public administration etc; 19% left school with a school-leavers certificate or O grades and a further 13 % left with Highers (or equivalent). Fifteen percent have post graduate qualifications such as PhDs, and medical and legal qualifications. Almost a quarter of the women (23%) have returned to training or education as adults, often when their children started school.

Length of Service:

Length of service has been calculated up to the shadow elections (April 95) except in the cases of interviewees who left elected politics in May 94. The women's councillors length of service varied from one year(7) to 24 years (1) with most clustered in the 1.5 terms (6 years) to 2.5 terms (10 years) range. Of the 94 newcomers 3:7 were existing district councillors and one had been a district councillor recently. In total 5/53 serve on both a Regional and a District Council. All are from the SNP or the Liberal Democrats. In addition another three councillors have had previous local authority experience.

Political Backgrounds.

Political Families:

The councillors were all asked questions about their political backgrounds, in particular whether they had come from 'political families' following Budge et al (1972) and Barron et al. (1991). In the current study 24% of women councillors came from politically active families (party members, party activists, trade union officials or activists), whilst a further 43% came from politically interested families where, parents were active citizens, or where current affairs and politics were discussed in the family home.

Table B.2: Degree of political activism or political interest in councillors' childhood homes.

Active	Interested	Not really	No
24%	43%	12 %	21%

Two thirds (66%) of the spouses or ex-spouses of the interviewees were politically active, or themselves came from political families. In addition 15% of the group reported their partners or ex-partners are or had been councillors and, in one case was a current Member of Parliament. It was noticeable in the interviews that several women spoke about becoming interested in politics through their partners.

The case of *Zero Tolerance* : Women's Politics in Action ?

**Fiona Mackay
Politics Department
University of Edinburgh
31 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh
EH8 9JT**

**Politics Department Waverley Papers series on Scottish Matters.
December, 1995**

Abstract

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign, an anti-violence public education campaign which originated out of Edinburgh District Council's Women's committee in 1992 has attracted considerable interest throughout the UK, Europe and worldwide. It has increased public and political debate about violence against women and children and has raised the issue higher up the political agenda. As a case study, *Zero Tolerance* raises important questions about the scope and impact of feminist interventions in the local state. It also provides a useful site to explore the possibility of an emerging 'women's politics'. This working paper firstly gives a narrative of the genesis and development of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign in Edinburgh and in Scotland more generally; and secondly, examines factors accounting for its success. In particular, the support of women councillors for the campaign is examined. Drawing upon research carried out by the author in four participating Scottish local authorities, it explores the importance of the presence of women in the local state as elected members and as officers and the significance of women's and equal opportunities committees as proactive agents of feminist change. Furthermore, it considers the view that, in the Scottish context, there has been a convergence between women's movement activists and the agenda of women working in local authorities as councillors and as officers. It argues that the case study of *Zero Tolerance* illustrates a striking and rare example of women's politics in action.

Introduction

Husband, Father, Stranger : Male Abuse of Power is a Crime.
Zero Tolerance Campaign (1994)

Zero Tolerance came from actually asking women: 'What concerns you?' We never dreamt, of course, that it was going to take off as it did.

**Councillor Margaret McGregor,
Convenor, Edinburgh DC Women's Committee (1994)**

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign is a groundbreaking public awareness initiative which challenges social attitudes and myths surrounding violence against women and children. It originated with Edinburgh District Council's women's committee in 1992 and was launched with broad political, civic and church backing. By March 1995 the campaign had been taken up by eleven other Scottish councils, by the Association of London Authorities, seven other English councils and had also been launched in South Australia.¹ The campaign has succeeded in generating high levels of public debate and has pushed the issue of violence and sexual violence higher up the political agenda. It has been marked by success in terms of not only public response, but also uptake from other authorities and support from a wide range of agencies and women's groups. Additionally, the campaign has won acclaim for its design.

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign can be seen as distinctive and an exception to local authority politics for several reasons. It is a radical initiative in that it seeks to challenge existing power relations and effect far-reaching social change. The campaign challenges *all* men to acknowledge male violence, and individual men to take responsibility for their violence. In addition, it is an explicitly feminist campaign in a number of ways. Firstly, it shares a feminist perspective in its 'naming' of violence as a political issue. Secondly, it uses a feminist analysis of violence as a male abuse of power and it links sexual violence, domestic violence and child sexual abuse as part of what feminists have identified as the 'continuum of violence' (Kelly, 1988). It also defines emotional and psychological abuse as forms of violence. Thirdly, it specifically uses empowering images of women - rather than 'victim' imagery. This builds upon the women's movement philosophy of self-help and personal empowerment. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign - although it comes out of

local government - can thus be positioned as an initiative based upon and informed by twenty years of groundwork by the women's movement.

This working paper is based upon initial findings from a larger research project carried out by the author into women in local government. A study of four Scottish local authorities participating in the *Zero Tolerance* initiative was conducted between March 1994 and February 1995². Evidence is drawn from three sets of data: in-depth semi-structured interviews with 53 women councillors; briefings with specialist staff, convenors of womens and/or equal opportunities committees and other key informants in political parties and women's advocacy groups; and a documentary review, including council minutes and policy documents, *Zero Tolerance* campaign literature, and reports of the campaign in assorted media. Material used in this paper focuses upon women councillors' involvement with, and attitudes towards, the *Zero Tolerance* campaign.

The study was developed to explore the link between the feminisation of politics and the process of promoting gender equality in terms of social policy outcome. Feminist theory suggests that the entry of women into decision-making channels may have an impact upon political elites leading to, for example, an increased focus upon gender issues; and a change in the style of politics (Dahlerup, 1988; Haavio-Mannila et al, 1985), although different models suggest different degrees of outcome in terms of success in implementing social change. Concepts of a 'women's politics' based upon notions of a shared 'women's culture' are both notoriously vague and fiercely contested. Some feminist academics (Hedlund, 1988; Carroll, 1992) suggest there is a core of shared interests, common values and patterns of interaction which arise out of women's specific position as a result of the sexual division of labour in society. Others find these constructs problematic and are critical of their reactionary and essentialist potential (Randall, 1987; Barrett, 1987). Empirical evidence is mixed although many feminist political scientists, including for example, Ellen Boneparth and Emily Soper (1988) have argued that the presence of women elected office holders, whether feminists or not, is one of the factors in the successful promotion of women's issues.

This working paper provides a brief narrative of the genesis and development of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign. It examines the processes by which this radical, but genuinely popular, campaign reached the agenda, how consensus and legitimisation

were constructed and other factors accounting for its success. It explores the importance of the presence of women in the local state as elected members and as officers and the significance of women's committees as proactive agents of feminist change. It considers the view that there has been a convergence between women's movement activists and the agenda of women working in local authorities as elected members and as officers. Furthermore it suggests that the case study provides evidence of an emerging 'women's politics'.

The conclusions of the *Zero Tolerance* case study are tentative at this initial stage, however this working paper is intended to document an important development and to provide a focus for further discussion in the on-going debate in Scotland and elsewhere into the existence and nature of women's politics in action. In addition, this working paper should be seen as contributing to contemporary discussions around the marked mobilisation and networking of activist women in Scotland in the 1990s.³

The *Zero Tolerance* Campaign

It was a bit like I'd died and gone to heaven. There above all the shoppers in Edinburgh's Princes Street ran the bold message, 'There is never an excuse.' There on the grassy bank halfway up the Mound sat a white Z of flowers. There at Hiberian a huge 'Z' symbol was emblazoned across the nets. Men on the terracing were eating their pies out of cartons and boxes overprinted with *Zero Tolerance* statistics ... In doctor's surgeries patients sat beside posters proclaiming, 'No Man has the Right'. In swimming pools, school galas splashed off beside the happy image of three young women, and the message, 'When They Say No, they mean no'...The campaign for *Zero Tolerance* of violence against women is really HAPPENING all over Edinburgh...

Broadcaster and journalist Lesley Riddoch, writing in the Scottish feminist magazine *Harpies and Quines*⁴ voiced the sense of empowerment and positive support felt by many women in Scotland since the launch of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign. The success of the campaign has been on a scale beyond the expectations and experience of local government women's committees in general. In addition, despite being a radical campaign on a classic 'feminist issue' it was received with broad political, civic and public support and there is evidence that it has galvanised local communities and women's groups in Scotland.

The initiative was informed by the long-term British anti drink-driving public awareness campaigns and was also based, in part, on a Canadian government national anti-violence programme which was launched in response to the death of fourteen young women in the 'Montreal Massacre'.⁵

The Edinburgh District Council (EDC) campaign sought to 'name' the problem of violence against women, to challenge men to take responsibility for their actions and to work towards the 'zero tolerance' of violence against women.⁶ The campaign is built around the idea of 'The Three Ps' : Prevention; Provision and Protection. Its stated long term objectives were to generate public debate and focus on strategies to *prevent* crimes of violence against women; to highlight the need for the *provision* of adequate support services; to highlight the need for appropriate legal *protection* for women and children victims/survivors of violence.

In the shorter term, the campaign sought to highlight the prevalence of various crimes of violence against women and children, linking these crimes as part of a continuum of male abuse of power; to promote a criminalisation strategy and send out a clear message that these forms of violence should not be tolerated; and to debunk some of the myths around these crimes. In particular the campaign sought to challenge commonplace perceptions that violence is solely a working class problem, that women and children are most at risk from strangers, and that sexual violence or violence only happens to certain women because of their age, their appearance, dress or behaviour. These ideas and insights have been well-known for many years within the women's movement, but the messages were less familiar to the wider public, including many local government politicians and officers. Indeed campaigners have clearly acknowledged the pioneering work of the women's movement and have positioned the campaign within the feminist tradition.

Violence as a feminist issue : breaking the silence

The purpose of feminist activism on sexual violence began with the necessity of making the private pain and shame of women public, a collective refusal to keep men's secrets and from this beginning has grown a multitude of activities, many of which are still directed at removing the legacy of centuries of permission'

(Kelly, Burton and Regan,1994)

The true scale of violence against women and children is unknown, however rape, sexual assault and domestic violence are believed to be massively under-reported. For example, researchers Rebecca and Russell Dobash estimate that only 2% of domestic violence is reported to the police (1992). Monica McWilliams and Joan McKiernan (1993) note evidence which suggests that violence against women in the home occurs in between 10 per cent and 25 per cent of all relationships. Lorna Smith in a Home Office review of domestic violence studies discusses the problem of assessing the extent of violence against women which is, by its nature, hidden, minimised and ignored. The limitations to both information drawn from general population surveys and data extrapolated from small-scale studies mean that 'there is simply no reliable estimate' of the extent of domestic violence. Nevertheless, notwithstanding all the problems involved, she argues that the inescapable conclusion of all the evidence is that 'domestic violence constitutes a pervasive problem' (Smith, 1989:14)

There are several key features to the problem of violence: men are predominantly the perpetrators of violence and sexual assault; and women and children are predominantly its victims; statistically, women and children are more at risk in their homes from men they know, than they are at risk from strangers out of doors .

The issue of violence against women has been the focus of social and political campaigning by feminists in the second wave of 20th century women's movement from the 1970s onwards.⁷ The seventh and final demand of the Women's Liberation Movement was:

Freedom for all women from violence, or the threat of violence, and sexual coercion, regardless of marital status, and an end to all laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women.

Feminists have also been instrumental in raising the issue of child sexual abuse from the mid 1980s and in linking differing forms of violence against women and children

. Feminist anti-violence campaigns have involved political mobilisation around issues of protection and prevention; and feminist groups such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis have also been at the forefront of provision of practical help in the form of refuges for women escaping violence, crisis help-lines and long-term support and counselling for survivors of violence and sexual assault.

Feminist activism has broken the silence which surrounded domestic violence, sexual assault and child sex abuse. As Hague and Malos comment, the Government in the 1990s is open in its condemnation of domestic violence in a way that would have been 'unthinkable when the issue began to enter the public arena in the 70s, as a result of the activities of the women's movement of the time' (Hague and Malos, 1994:113). Feminist groups have also been largely successful in being recognised by sections of the policy community as expert service providers. However feminists have been less successful at promoting their definition and analysis of violence as a male abuse of power and therefore a political issue, rather than primarily a private or a social welfare problem. Nor have they succeeded, to date, in securing a national government strategy on violence and adequate funding for recommended refuge spaces. There is a built-in shortfall in funding to women's aid and rape crisis groups at both national and local government level which has siphoned off much of their energy into fundraising and keeping services afloat. For example, in 1994 Scottish Women's Aid had to launch an emergency appeal to cover a funding crisis. In 1995 Scotland still had only 40% of the minimum number of refuge spaces recommended by the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA); and England had just 27% of spaces recommended by the 1975 Parliamentary Select Committee on Violence in Marriage.⁸

Origins of campaign

The campaign was developed in response to two pieces of research commissioned by EDC's women's committee. Local women interviewed in 1990, as part of EDC women's committees regular three-yearly consultation exercise, identified violence against women / women's safety as one of their main issues of concern along with childcare and access to training and employment (Stevenson, 1990). In 1992, a survey of secondary school pupils was undertaken by Nancy Falchikov to examine adolescents' attitudes about violence against women. It revealed disturbingly high levels of acceptance of, and misconceptions about, domestic violence amongst

adolescents. It found that boys, some as young as twelve, were more accepting of violence towards women than girls. Both girls and boys found violence more acceptable if the victim was married to the abuser. The majority of boys and girls reported that they expected violence to feature in their personal relationships in the future. One positive finding was that exposure to information about violence against women appeared to influence attitudes and make it less acceptable (Falchikov, 1992).

In response to these findings, EDC women's committee agreed to fund a six month public awareness campaign around issues of violence against women and children. The campaign was produced in-house by women's officers who brought in freelance feminist designer and photographer, Franki Raffles. The campaign team argued that very little work had been done in terms of challenging social attitudes about violence or in challenging male perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions. The main focus of previous initiatives had been to provide personal safety strategies for women to avoid attacks by strangers which reinforced the myths that women and children are most at risk from strangers and that women are themselves somehow responsible for preventing or avoiding violence. One of the team explained:

There was stuff going out about violence from the Scottish Office and the [Lothian] Region but it was putting the responsibility onto women - to avoid places, to hide their femaleness, if you like. I can remember one set of guidelines which advised women if they broke down in their car to try not to look like a woman! We didn't feel the way violence was being discussed was helpful. *Zero Tolerance* wanted to name the problem - which of course wasn't a new message in the women's movement - but we wanted to make it much more public - to reach a wider public.

The initial campaign, which ran from December 1992 to May 1993, consisted of posters challenging stereotypical views of different aspects of violence such as domestic violence, child sexual abuse and sexual assault. It was devised in consultation with local women's aid and rape crisis groups and MOSAC, a self-support group for mothers of sexually abused children. The campaign used powerful positive black and white photographic images of women of all ages in cosy domestic situations alongside information about the nature and prevalence of domestic and sexual violence. The purposes of this strategy were two-fold: firstly, a decision to portray women as 'survivors' rather than 'victims' and thus be a resource of support for women to draw upon; secondly, to underline the hidden nature of abuse by juxtaposing comfortable images with uncomfortable messages in the text. The use of middle class imagery was designed to challenge common myths that domestic

violence and sexual abuse only happen in certain social classes or sections of the community and that it does not happen to women and children from 'normal' families.

The initial campaign consisted of four posters. The first dealt with child sex abuse, it portrayed two girls playing with the text: *'By the time they reach eighteen, one of them will have been subjected to sexual abuse.. From Flashing to Rape : Male Abuse of Power is a Crime'*. The second poster dealt with domestic violence and portrayed a woman in tranquil domestic scene with the text: *'She lives with a successful businessman, loving father and respected member of the community. Last week he hospitalised her. Emotional, Physical, Sexual : Male abuse of power is a crime.'* The third dealt with rape, the poster showed a small girl and her grandmother reading a bedtime story , the accompanying text was: *'From three to ninety three, women are raped. Husband, Father, Stranger : Male Abuse of Power is a Crime'*. The fourth poster was all text, and read: *'No Man Has The Right'* with a large 'Z' which is the logo for *Zero Tolerance*.

The posters were displayed on billboards and Adshell display sites throughout the city as well as indoor sites such as public houses, libraries, police stations, community and recreation centres. Subsequently, posters were displayed on the large prominent tripods which line Edinburgh's main shopping area, Princes Street, with statements such as *'No Man Has The Right'* and *'Male Abuse of Power is a Crime'* as well as statistics about the prevalence of violence against women. A fifth poster about date rape was launched in 1994 which showed three young women chatting and the text: *'When they say no, they mean no. Some men don't listen. Whoever, Wherever, Whenever - Male Abuse of Power in a Crime '*. In addition, a general campaign leaflet and *Zero Tolerance* bookmarks were distributed through libraries and other recreational outlets. Postcard packs describing the campaign were sent out to those requesting further information. People were encouraged to sign 'pledges' of their *Zero Tolerance* of violence against women and children and were urged to lobby local and national governments tackle the issue.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the first phase of the campaign was carried out by Jenny Kitzinger and Kate Hunt of the University of Glasgow Media Group in 1993. The exercise was

designed to assess public response to the campaign, including public perceptions as to the need for, and acceptability of, advertising campaigns around issues of violence. A street survey was conducted with a representative sample of 228 people in Edinburgh in order to elicit the views of the general population. In addition, focus group discussions were conducted with a number of interest groups in order to explore a range of opinions.

Findings indicated that the *Zero Tolerance* campaign had been extremely successful in both attracting attention and in gaining a positive reaction from the public. The campaign achieved its initial aim of generating public debate and highlighting the prevalence of male violence, sending out a clear message that it was not to be tolerated. Focus group data suggested that the campaign raised people's knowledge about the shortfall in provision of services for women subjected to violence and the shortcomings of the legal system in protecting women and children. And that once people were aware of these shortfalls they expressed discontent at the status quo. People also recognised that the campaign was seeking to debunk some of the myths around violence against women, such as the myth that it is only a working class problem, or that most sexual assaults are perpetrated by strangers. The women in the images were seen as 'people with rights'. The evaluation suggested that the campaign provided people with new information and perspectives and had been thought provoking (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993). A member of an incest survivors self-help group, who took part in the evaluation exercise, described her reaction to the campaign:

You know that sort of prickly feeling, like when you see something and thinkoooooh! It was when all the posters were up along the tripods along Princes Street [...] I couldn't believe it. I was going along in the bus and I thought: 'There's one of there. There's another one! They haven't got them all along Princes Street ...YES! They have! It was very good. [I felt] Yes, this is what I want. I want people to see this. (reported by Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993: 21)

Subsequent evaluations have been carried out elsewhere with similarly positive findings. There is growing evidence in participating authorities to suggest that the campaign has enabled women to come forward in greater numbers to seek support to resist domestic violence, child sexual abuse, rape and sexual assault. For example, in the first six months of the campaign there was a 300% increase in enquiries to Edinburgh Women's Aid. In the corresponding period Edinburgh Rape Crisis had a

31% increase in women presenting themselves. Similarly other Scottish groups have reported marked increases in demand for information and support since the campaign launched in their areas. (Engender, 1994, 1995) There is also some evidence that women seeking help are more informed about the nature and the interlinking of differing forms of male violence (Breitenbach, 1995a).

Uptake and development of the campaign

The Edinburgh campaign sparked enormous interest from other local authorities and organisations in Britain, Europe and worldwide. For example, in 1995 the campaign was run in South Australia. Meanwhile, a co-ordinated and coherent campaign has developed in Scotland since 1994 which involves several local authorities and other agencies. As a result, the campaign now covers most of Scotland. One of the original *Zero Tolerance* team has commented that they had achieved a Scottish national campaign 'by the back door'. In 1994, *Zero Tolerance* was launched by Tayside Regional Council with leading support from City of Dundee District Council, Strathclyde Regional Council with leading support from the City of Glasgow District Council, and Central Regional Council. It was also taken up by the City of Aberdeen District Council, with some funding from Grampian R.C., Strathclyde R.C., the largest local authority in Britain until its abolition in 1996, and Central R.C. both worked in partnership with their district councils, including Conservative-controlled local authorities, health boards, voluntary sector groups and other agencies. Although their campaigns have necessarily been more diffuse than Edinburgh's they have made significant progress in inter-agency development work. For example, both Central R.C. and Strathclyde R.C. have developed educational materials and have worked with secondary schools.

The campaign has developed a comprehensive and innovative publicity strategy amongst participating authorities in Scotland including advertising on trains, subways and buses. There have been conferences, seminars, banners at festivals, training courses, theatre projects, local press and radio campaigns, school studies and a wide range of community events. Edinburgh continued to innovate, with a 'No Excuses' bus advertising and poster campaign in 1994. This challenged excuses commonly given for violence with the slogan: *Blame the Weather, Blame the Drink, Blame the Woman ...There is Never An Excuse.* It also launched a football initiative with star players from the city's two football clubs pledging their support for the campaign,

and *Zero Tolerance* publicity prominently displayed at the club grounds. In parallel to the public face of *Zero Tolerance*, EDC has also developed a 'within council' strategy including a domestic violence policy for its own staff, drawn up with the help of the public sector union UNISON, and believed to be the first of its kind in Britain.

Political and media support has also been high profile. A motion in support of the campaign was laid before the House of Commons and the campaign was raised in the European Parliament. Edinburgh District Council lobbied the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) to call for a co-ordinated national, regional and local anti-violence campaign. It is widely accepted that the Scottish Office Crime Prevention Council's £300,000 advertising campaign against domestic violence which was launched in June 1994 was at least partly a result of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign and associated lobbying (Engender, 1995).

In 1995, participating Scottish local authorities launched a joint football initiative which took the campaign to the grounds of most major football clubs. The second phase of the joint poster campaign called: *What's Love Got to Do With It ?* , ran in the summer of 1995, backed up by a cinema advertisement aimed at 15 to 25 year olds. This phase tackled common myths about the causes of violence and built upon the earlier 'Excuses' phase in Edinburgh. The work of Scottish authorities, both jointly and individually, on *Zero Tolerance* has been cited as examples of best practice in an EOC (Scotland) report on equal opportunities initiatives in local government (Breitenbach, 1995a).

A national *Zero Tolerance* Trust was proposed in order to co-ordinate the development and promotion of the campaign and related issues on a Scottish and UK-wide basis in light of the growth in interest. Another key function of the Trust was to safeguard the campaign from fragmentation as a result of local government reorganisation post 1996. However the work of the campaign received a major blow with the shocking death of the creator and designer of *Zero Tolerance*, photographer Franki Raffles, who died suddenly on December 6, 1994 shortly after giving birth to twin girls. Franki whose powerful images of women have been exhibited all over Britain and overseas was a key activist for women's issues. Copyright for *Zero Tolerance* and its distinctive logos was owned by Franki Raffles and plans for the National *Zero Tolerance* Trust - of which she was to have been a trustee - were put

in some uncertainty while legal issues were resolved. However at time of writing (December 1995) The Trust had been launched, albeit on a less ambitious scale than previously proposed.

Factors for success

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign was high risk in its radical approach, it was provocative and delivered uncomfortable messages about the nature and prevalence of violence. Campaigners shared an understanding with feminist policy analysts and activists that policies which challenge existing power relations were likely to provoke resistance and counter-attack (Firestone, 1972; Gelb and Palley, 1987; Boneparth and Soper, 1988; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994; Young, 1990) Thus, the EDC women's unit had expected political and public backlash, especially from men. Yet the campaign has been characterised by high levels of support and consensus. This is not to say that there has not been criticism. The messages of the campaign have undoubtedly offended certain politicians and other sections of the community. The main criticisms of the campaign have been that the messages are anti men and that statistics used have been inaccurate. These claims have been vigorously refuted by the campaign team. The campaign has also provoked some extreme responses. The unit have had to deal with some abusive phonecalls and angry correspondence. There have been instances where posters have been defaced, and other *Zero Tolerance* materials vandalised. However, in contrast to the reaction provoked by the work of women's committees in the 1980s, publicly expressed opposition to the campaign has not been sustained and there is little evidence to date of an organised political backlash.

Enabling Contexts

The fact that *Zero Tolerance* was a strong, innovative and well-planned campaign was no guarantee for success. However there were several key factors which reduced the possibility of conflict and failure, and which facilitated the successful implementation and dissemination of the campaign. Firstly, there were a range of enabling political and structural contexts some British, some more specifically Scottish, which provided a 'window of opportunity' for a feminist campaign. These include the existence of women's and equal opportunities initiatives in British local government, together with the relative strength of the Edinburgh women's committee

in particular, and Scottish initiatives in general. In addition, the strength of women's networking, particularly within Scotland was significant. Similarly, the campaign was able to tap the changed social and political context in which issues such as violence are discussed - a striking feature of which is the social, political and personal salience of the issue of violence to a wide variety of women.

At a specific level several factors can be identified which contributed towards the successful launch and development of the campaign in Edinburgh and elsewhere. These are: the initial political management of the campaign; and the support of women in the local state, both councillors and officers.

Enabling contexts I : women's committees

The campaign originated in an environment where there were women's committees and equal opportunities structures in place. Halford (1988) has suggested the existence of these structures signals that gender politics are at least formally accepted as part of the local authority agenda. The creation of local government women's committees, and their subsequent work, has been an interesting development in the pattern of feminist activity in the 1980s and 1990s (See for example, Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Edwards, 1995). Vicky Randall (1992) contrasts the 'gloomy picture' of complacency and indifference towards gender equality policy issues at national government level with this 'paradoxical and quite heartening development' at regional and local level. She suggests that women's committees 'have provided a real if precarious "window of opportunity" for feminism in these otherwise unpropitious years.' (Randall, 1992: 83)

Two main types of initiatives exist, those created with the explicit aim of promoting the interests and welfare of women; and other initiatives created to promote the related issue of equality of opportunity for women and other disadvantaged groups, particularly in terms of employment. The first full standing women's committee and women's unit was in Greater London Council in 1982. In its short life it distributed £30 million to various groups and projects, almost half of that money for childcare provision (Hunt, 1986). More than half of all British local authorities have now devised policies which fall within the broad remit of equal opportunities however a far smaller proportion have specific structures.

The first Women's Committee in Scotland was set up by Stirling District Council in 1984. By 1995 there were 11 full women's or equal opportunities committees and four sub-committee /advisory group structures in Scotland. Eleven authorities have one or more specialist staff in post (Kelly, 1995). In 1994 there were 32 full women's/equal opportunities committees (WLAN, 1994) which meant that Scotland with around 9% of the U.K. population had around a third of all women's/ equal opportunities initiatives (Kelly, 1995).

As elsewhere in Britain, women's/ equal opportunities committees in Scotland have had a difficult history (Lieberman, 1989; Coote and Patullo, 1990). Few women's committees and units were adequately staffed or resourced, and most have had to struggle in marginalised positions both politically and organisationally. The media, particularly in the 1980s, has often been hostile and seldom sympathetic. Several women's committees have not survived, including Stirling's. In addition, women's and equal opportunities committees have had to operate within a deeply macho political and organisational culture (Kelly, 1995). Many officers appointed to women's initiatives in the early days were 'outsiders' and found themselves floundering in the unfamiliar and unfriendly structures of local authority bureaucracy.

However despite real tensions and difficulties, there has been a steady growth of women's and equal opportunities initiatives in Scotland which may be contrasted with the position in England and Wales where development has been more uneven (Lovenduski and Randall 1993). Julia Edwards in her recent examination of local authority women's committees talks about the 'cohesiveness' of Scottish local government women's committees in contrast to those in England (1995:58). In Scotland there is cautious optimism, women's committees in Scotland are seen as having had a limited but marked impact as agents of change and, in the case of Edinburgh, as succeeding in challenging and changing the ethos of the authority (Kelly 1992, 1995, Breitenbach, 1995a).

Edinburgh District Council has been led by a progressive Labour Left administration since 1984. Women are visible as both councillors and officers within the authority. Edinburgh District Council has had a women's committee, with specialist staff, in place since 1985, and the administration remains committed to an equality agenda. Key support for *Zero Tolerance* has been maintained by the Labour leadership -

Mark Lazarovitz when the campaign was first launched; and then Lesley Hinds from her election as council leader in 1993.

Edinburgh District Council women's committee was set up in 1985. It is one of several proactive or radical model committees in Scotland, and is commonly recognised as one of the most innovative. Ellen Kelly, women's unit policy officer at Edinburgh since 1987 notes that EDC has learned lessons from the GLC women's committee, in particular it has become skilled at producing alternative information and publicity about its work to counter media attacks.⁹ In addition, it has established and maintained good communications with women's groups and community groups. Kelly argues that these lessons have both informed the committees' work and supported them in tackling political, organisational and media resistance to change. She suggests these links may also have contributed to the survival of the women's committee (Kelly, 1995:116)

By the time EDC women's unit launched *Zero Tolerance*, it had developed strategies of popular consultation and had strong, well-rooted links with women in the community and with women's groups. In addition, unlike the experience of some other women's units, especially in the 1980s, it had become successfully established within the political and organisational structures of the authority; and it was staffed by officers experienced both in local government and in campaign work.

Enabling contexts II : Women's networking

The campaign also took place against a backdrop of extensive, formal and informal, networking and exchanges of information between women's groups in Scotland. Networking between women's groups is well established in Scotland, facilitated by both geographical size and also the marked mobilisation of a wide cross-section of women, partisan and non-partisan, feminist and non-feminist, around the issue of women's representation in the proposed Scottish Parliament.

There has been an active women's movement in Scotland since the early 1970s which paralleled the demands and concerns of the women's movement in the rest of Britain. Esther Breitenbach (1990,1995b) has argued that the movement has become more distinctively Scottish in the 1980s and 1990s, partly in reaction to the perceived

adverse affects of Thatcherism for Scottish women, but more specifically as a result of mobilisation around the issue of constitutional reform in Scotland.

Alice Brown and others have charted the rise of activism amongst women in the Scottish political parties, the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and civic groupings around the issue of women's representation (Brown and Galligan 1993; Brown, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996 forthcoming). This activism in part mirrors feminist activity in the rest of Britain, and in part is distinctive to the Scottish context and the idea that women suffer from a 'double democratic deficit'. This deficit occurs firstly on a general level because of the 'outsider' position of Scotland within the current shape of UK politics; and specifically on a gender level because women are grossly under-represented within the power structures of political parties and as elected members of local and national decision-making assemblies. Catriona Burness (1995) has argued that gender equality has become an intrinsic part of the broader debates of democracy, accountability and representation in Scotland.

This distinctive Scottish context has resulted in a developing sense of connection between a wide range of women's groups and between a variety of activist women on an explicit gender issue. As such, there has been an emerging sense of a 'broad kirk' and, with that, some blurring of the boundaries between community groups, autonomous women's organisations, civic groups and party politics; and between different strands of feminism (Brown, 1995b).

The networking amongst groups promoting change for women is a marked feature of the Scottish political landscape. Generally good relationships exist between women's groups and women's and equalities structures in Scotland. Several key activists in the women's refuge and rape crisis movement are now Labour councillors. In other cases, existing councillors from all parties have subsequently become involved in anti-violence work or campaigning. Membership of women's groups tends to overlap, for example, *Engender*, the Scottish feminist research and campaigning group, draws members from political parties, trades unions, women's organisations, the women's movement, academia and the public and voluntary sectors. Kelly has described the interweaving of women's groups in Scotland:

All have their own objectives but these often overlap, and there is considerable if informal interlinking between participants, which ebbs and flows with the demands of current issues.(1995:193)

Therefore the campaign originated in an environment where there were structures in place; where there was extensive networking and exchanges of information between women's groups; and where there was experience of working in loose alliance around specific issues. Indeed, the existence of women's networks has been an important factor, not only as a supportive and enabling context, but also because of the key role they played in the dissemination and progress of campaign throughout Scotland and Britain. For example, the campaign is supported and promoted in local authorities throughout Britain by the alliance of women's committees, the Women's Local Authority Network (WLAN).

Enabling contexts III - salience of the issue

The scale of public support for the campaign was far beyond the expectations of the campaign team and served to strengthen the women's committee's claim to speak for ordinary women's concerns. This support bolstered any 'wobbles' in the construction and maintenance of political consensus. It also indicated a changed political and social context in which violence is discussed, arguably as a result of the groundwork of the women's movement in raising the issues, and the possible diffusion of some feminist values into popular culture including a greater willingness by women to 'break the silence'. The *Zero Tolerance* campaign tapped a wellspring of support and recognition from women in the community, and also women in local authorities, officers, workers and councillors. In the first few months of the Edinburgh campaign, the unit received hundreds of letters and phonecalls from women. Campaign workers in all participating authorities report that have been overwhelmed by the support of women.

The Edinburgh evaluation exercise found that although support for the campaign was generally high, it was gendered. Women were markedly more supportive of the campaign than men. In addition, women's support tended to be more active and they were knowledgeable about the issues¹⁰. Both *Zero Tolerance* campaigners and the Edinburgh evaluation exercise found that women were more accepting of the *Zero Tolerance* statistics about violence than were men; and that a major reason for accepting or rejecting the statistics lay in people's personal experience or their knowledge of friends or relatives with personal experience.

Those who had friends they knew had been raped, battered or abused were more likely to accept the figures than those who believed that they did not know anyone who had been physically or sexually assaulted (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993:10)

Many women who had experienced violence and sexual abuse welcomed the campaign. Participants in the evaluation focus groups said *Zero Tolerance* posters made them feel less isolated and made them feel better able to deal with past experiences and instances of continuing violence. 'They complained it was *silence* which was the problem - not being confronted with unpleasant facts' (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993:25).

To summarise, therefore, in the case of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign, a number of enabling factors existed at both Scottish and local level. These contexts worked to make space for feminists to create and implement initiatives; they also provided crucial support networks.

Initial Management of campaign

The success of *Zero Tolerance* can also be attributed to the initial management of the campaign by the Edinburgh team. There was an anticipation that there would be a backlash - based on both theory and practise. Therefore extensive steps were taken to minimise and manage the backlash - and conversely to work to build and maintain support and legitimacy for the campaign. In addition, the campaign team sought to prevent any dilution of the message by retaining control over the definition of the issue, and the development of materials. The campaign was legitimised by strategies of popular consultation and targetted research, as discussed earlier. The strength of the campaign came from EDC women's committee's authority to speak for 'ordinary women'. This is a feature and a strength of women's committees and equal opportunities committees who have, in many cases, pioneered and developed effective strategies of popular consultation.

The expertise and experience of specialist women's groups like Scottish Women's Aid (SWA), Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (ERC) and Mothers of Sexually Abused Children (MOSAC) was also recognised and they were consulted about the material. In addition, a relatively long period of time, some six months, was spent pre-launch in lobbying in order to build up a broad consensus of support for the issue from key political, civic, religious and community groups. The campaign secured advance

support from various notable agencies and opinion-leaders, including Lothian and Borders Police and all the main churches and, crucially, the local media. The city's evening paper the Edinburgh Evening News adopted the issue and ran its own 'Free Us From Fear' campaign in parallel with *Zero Tolerance* with feature and news articles on each of the issues addressed by the posters.

In addition, cross-party political support was secured within the authority, but again the detailed content of the campaign was not discussed. Apart from the convenor of the Women's Committee, no other politicians saw the material prior to the launch. This was a conscious strategy by the officers who were clear that they needed to keep the campaign under wraps until the launch to prevent the radical message being diluted. They argued from the experience of other women's groups and women's committee campaigns that issues tended to be modified or diluted.

The support of women councillors

Although women councillors in Scotland do not generally identify themselves as feminist, many are 'pro-equality' and do act as agents or supporters of change (Kelly, 1992). For example, in the current study, women councillors from different political parties showed high levels of awareness of women's groups and women's issues. Furthermore, some 83% had aims which they perceived as relevant to women, and 49% saw themselves as representing women.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of common interests and understanding around issues of violence has been in the crucial political support for *Zero Tolerance* from women councillors, both feminist and non - feminist across all four target authorities in the current study. Support for the campaign has also been cross-party. For example, in Edinburgh, one of the key supporters of the campaign has been a Conservative woman councillor and former Conservative group leader who commented that she has discovered that the quickest way to clear a space around oneself at a cocktail party is to raise *Zero Tolerance*.

It has caused quite a few ruffles among men and women in all political parties, because it is an uncomfortable thing to be faced with.[...] I think the campaign has done a very good job in raising public awareness and in causing debate and controversy[...] I have consistently opposed the sort of loony elements of women's committee spending and thinking in this council [...] but this is

something that I wholeheartedly support, because unless you have the image raising of the issues then you will not get action.(Con)

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign was able to tap into parallel debates within women's circles in the Scottish Conservative party around violence against women, in particular erratic sentencing policies for convicted rapists and sex attackers. 'Judy', a prominent party activist, put violence against women firmly on the Scottish Conservative political agenda after a remarkable speech she made to the Scottish Conservative Party Conference in May 1993. She spoke of her ordeal after being attacked by a bogus priest in her Edinburgh home. She attacked the judiciary who reduced her attacker's life sentence to six years on appeal and called for sweeping reforms, including the recruitment of more women judges¹¹. Several female Conservative councillors, including EDC councillors, were involved in the back-stage manoeuvrings which brought 'Judy's' story to the Scottish Conservative Party Conference. They used EDC women's unit briefings and *Zero Tolerance* statistics to prepare their cases.

More than half the women councillors interviewed (59%) rated *Zero Tolerance* and/or issues of violence as important on their personal political agendas. A further 35% saw the issue as quite important and only 6% viewed it as of little or no importance. There were high levels of support for the initiative from women councillors across party. Many critics of women's committees cited it as 'the best thing the women's committee has ever done'.

This is not to say, however, that there was unconditional support for the campaign. Not all women shared the feminist analysis of violence as a male abuse of power. Some, particularly Conservative women, favoured a stress upon protection and reform of sentencing policy for sex offender. Others would have preferred an emphasis on providing women with information about rights and resources. However the *Zero Tolerance* campaign was, in general, seen to be concerned with too important an issue to let women's reservations about its analysis or 'emphasis' prevent them from giving their support. Women who made criticisms of some aspects of the campaign also gave praise. Even the most vocal female critic of *Zero Tolerance*, a Conservative councillor at Edinburgh, made it clear that she supported the *principle* of the campaign, although she objected strongly to its 'radical feminist' emphasis in practise.

There was a striking determination shared by women across party and across generation that the issues of violence, sexual violence and sexual abuse should be 'out in the open'. In a clear parallel to the feminist approach of 'refusing to keep men's secrets', women councillors saw the *Zero Tolerance* campaign as part of an ongoing process of making violence and abuse visible. There was also widespread understanding of the scale and prevalence of violence against women.

There's no doubt whatsoever that an awful lot of women have been subjected to appalling violence. I wasn't aware of the scale of it until I became a councillor.
(Lab)

I think it is probably a lot larger and a lot deeper than the average person thinks. Perhaps people like myself [...] women that are involved - they probably realise it is on a fairly wide scale [...] and I think the most deadly aspect to me is the violence in the home. It needn't be somebody thumping somebody, it can be far more subtle than that : bullying and mental bullying and all sorts of more subtle things. (Con)

The under the carpet approach, when it was never talked about, is thankfully now being shed and people are becoming more able and willing to talk about the experience. I have a horrible feeling that we're still only at the surface and there's a heck of a lot more icebergs still under the water - and it worries me a bit that our society is in such a state. (SNP)

As noted earlier, the evaluation exercise showed that women were more likely than men to accept statistics indicating a high prevalence of violence and abuse; and that people in general were more likely to accept figures if they had experienced violence or had knowledge of others experience. Many women interviewees had knowledge of the issues through their work as councillors. District councillors, in particular, saw themselves at 'the sharp end' through their responsibility for dealing with housing matters.

It's the *normality* of it all. In my ward, there's a woman in her fifties who walks with a limp. I asked her, did she fall ? 'Och no, it's him, he used to beat me up a lot - all my life. He's getting too aul' now so he disnae hit me ony more'. This goes on. (Lab)

I feel [domestic violence] is something women don't admit to. The few cases I have seen could be the tip of the iceberg. Also I'm sitting here in my cosy suburb, where it will be different to some inner city wards. I don't *think* it's widespread in my ward- having said that, the ones I have dealt with I've dealt with only because of housing queries - they've needed to be rehoused or whatever .. so they've *had* to say something otherwise I think they wouldn't.
(Lib Dem)

As a result, women councillors argued that that violence against women was a massive problem which was hidden, and under reported. However not all reaction was entirely sympathetic - a small number of women were impatient that women 'kept going back' into abusive situations.

I'm sure this is controversial if I say to you that I have been appalled by the weakness of women - because we have helped people and gone out of our way and done everything physically possible and then the wife still goes back to the husband. Now, I cannot understand that. (Lib Dem)

Others councillors had experience of dealing with issues of violence through other work or counselling activities. One SNP councillor spoke about her work as a medical social worker counselling women survivors of child sexual abuse, 'I have spent hours trying to convince a woman that she was in no way guilty as a child'. A number of councillors spoke about their campaigning work within trade unions, writing and speaking to resolutions against violence against women:

Working with so many women - you are always aware of the different violences that are projected on women. (Lab)

Refuge and rape crisis groups have long recognised the potential of lobbying elected women members to support their work. A number of women had become involved in the field as a result of such approaches. A Liberal Democrat councillor discussed her response to a lobby by women's aid campaigners in her area.

I became a member of Women's Aid and a full working member of that because I felt I needed the knowledge and I needed the experience and I had to be able - when I got to my feet if I was going to argue their case for funding I had to know what I was talking about. And that probably was the one thing I felt that being a female - there's tremendous responsibility for because I was a woman and I thought it's not me I'm letting down here, it's everybody else if I don't get this right. (Lib Dem)

A majority of women councillors had personal experience of violence, including sexual assault and sexual abuse; or knowledge of close friends and relatives who had been assaulted or abused, and as such felt a connection with other women. A number of women said they doubted that any woman could avoid the experience of violence or abuse of some description at some time of their lives.¹²

I think every woman has had some experience of either sexual assault or whatever or attacked or beaten up. I think if you speak to every woman - people always seem quite shocked by the statistics - but then, if you actually think about your own experiences and speak to other women, then you realise the statistics

are probably underestimated. People tend not to speak about it, tend to sort of say 'well, it was my fault 'or ' I'll take that down to experience and I'll move on'...and they don't ever report things and they don't ever speak about it. So I think one of the good things is it's [*Zero Tolerance*] actually brought people out to speak about the issue.(Anon)

As a result women politicians, in common with women in the Edinburgh evaluation exercise, felt that one of the most important roles for the *Zero Tolerance* campaign was to 'break the silence'.

There was sexual abuse when I was a kid [...]That's made *Zero Tolerance* so important to me. I blame that [the abuse] for a lot of things, maybe that's why my marriage didn't last.I have now got granddaughters and that fear is still there.[...] It really was a stigma before, now with this *Zero Tolerance* - it's really giving women the opportunity to get it off their chests because until such time as they do ... I used to make myself ill when I was younger, I had nobody to talk to. (Anon)

Only one woman argued that the campaign should not be undertaken because it would increase councillors' workloads.

It's just going to give us more work - towards that sort of problem and we really cannot handle any more, we're not there as *counsellors* [...] I don't know about the rest of them, but I certainly don't like dealing with that sort of thing, I'm more interested in planning.(Lib Dem)

Women councillors' support for *Zero Tolerance* : 'a sort of solidarity'

Women understand. We may differ politically... one thing is we're all female; we all experience the same problems to a certain extent. Your financial position doesn't alter the fact that you're a woman [...] or how you're treated by men so I suppose that does lead to a sort of solidarity. (Lab)

Being a woman colours everything. (Con)

Women councillors gave their support in a number of ways. They worked with women officers and with activists within their own parties to push the campaign in their areas. Several women councillors in participating authorities have publicly spoken about their own experience of violence and there is some evidence that male politicians who were generally sceptical about the prevalence of violence, or were uncertain about the campaign, have changed their minds as a result of these disclosures.

In the case of one of the authorities in the current study, resistance to the proposed campaign within the Labour group evaporated when a woman councillor disclosed her experience of sexual abuse as a child. The woman, who had never spoken about her experience in a large mixed group before, made an on-the-spot decision to speak out after male colleagues began talking over the *Zero Tolerance* presentations being made to a crucial Labour group meeting; and the safe passage of the initiative as Labour group policy looked uncertain. After her disclosure the campaign was adopted as policy with no objections.

Personal testimony has been a characteristic feature of feminist politics and feminist strategy, especially in issues of the body, for instance abortion campaigning. However there is evidence that this process has taken place on a large scale in areas where *Zero Tolerance* has been adopted; from straw polls in offices and pubs, to difficult personal disclosures by public figures. The validity of personal experience has, it appears, been taken on board by women, who would not call themselves feminists, in a variety of social, organisational and political settings. There is also evidence that public disclosures have encouraged other women to speak out, sometimes for the first time.

Another major way in which women councillors progressed the *Zero Tolerance* campaign was in lobbying their male colleagues. They did this in the initial stages to secure support and, as an ongoing process, they maintained the momentum by discussing and defending the campaign from criticisms especially the charge that the campaign was 'anti-male' and that its message was that 'all men are rapists'. This work has been important in defusing potential resistance and backlash as well as in demonstrating the 'sort of solidarity' that women felt about the issue.

It is a continuous process of re-education. This message is a positive one. It is not doing men down. If you like, it is trying to bring out the best in men: the feminine qualities in men; the caring qualities in men; and letting them see that rape isn't funny in any circumstances. But you don't get these lessons across in one session - you have to sustain them and reinforce them, and you have to keep going. You know, it is not a one-off. (Con)

I've heard the attitudes of one or two of them [male councillors] saying: 'That's normal - you give them a belt around the ear'. They don't think there's anything wrong - but I see a change in them. They're becoming more aware - I think *Zero Tolerance* is working to educate male councillors. (Lab)

Although there was no direct confirmation from Conservative women themselves, a number of Labour women and specialist officers interviewed believed that Conservative women in participating authorities had 'kept the men in line' in their party groups.

The picture formed from the interviews is that women have worked hard at defusing opposition from male colleagues- but that they have also challenged the 'blandness' of men's attitudes on a political and social level.

The fact that it has caused some people to get really angry has been useful [...] people saying, 'This is ridiculous you're labelling all men as this and that'. It has caused a degree of discussion which is actually quite important because there is a lot of *blandness* around- a lot of, 'Oh, yes violence against women is a dreadful thing', because nobody would actually say it was a good thing! [...] The tendency politically is that, you may have had a resolution passed saying how dreadful it was and nobody opposes it, so it never gets discussed. And that's not necessarily a good thing - the crucial things aren't actually being addressed.(Lab)

Some of the guys here are really miffed because they think the *Zero Tolerance* campaign adverts are - they're upset at them and I said: "Well, what you have to do is to start thinking about your own attitudes - OK you're not involved in that but we cannae apologise because you're not involved in it. It's *happening*, other guys are doing this - it's happening to women and what you have to say when your pals or your brothers or your cousins or whatever or you're in the pub and people come away with something particularly offensive involving violence in a joke - or they say, 'What she needs is a right smack in the mouth', that sort of thing- challenge them on it. That's all we're saying you should be doing. Don't get mad at us, get mad at them, they're the ones who have made us have to do the campaign in the first place.(Lab)

The degree and form of women's support has varied widely. A small number of women have been proactive agents of change, closely involved with the campaign. They pushed it onto agendas, have spoken at meetings and have worked closely with women's officers. Others, whilst not involved at the agenda-setting stage of the campaign have been active in keeping the campaign on track; they have had input into policy development, have encouraged and worked in local groups; they have also intervened in promoting the campaign in departments where officers have resisted. Others have been supportive in smaller ways, displaying *Zero Tolerance* car stickers and badges. Another important way that women politicians have supported the campaign has been in their almost unanimous refusal to be drawn into public criticism of the campaign or to join in any attempted backlash.

This analysis of the importance and pattern of support is tentative and is based upon women politicians' perceptions which were sometimes at variance with other key actors. Not all women councillors were even minimally proactive; a few were complacent. However, in general, what these local politicians did *not* do was to trivialise, minimise or deny the problem of violence against women and children. It may be this display of a minimal level of solidarity which may have prevented a build up of backlash. This support indicates not only the personal and political salience of the issue for the women councillors themselves but also a recognition of its significance to women in the community. In addition, it also illustrates the marked change in the social context in which issues of violence are discussed and a possible diffusion of feminist values into the cultural mainstream.

Initial findings indicate that high levels of legitimacy were given to the campaign by women councillors across party. About three-quarters of the interviewees in the current study discussed whether they thought *Zero Tolerance* and similar campaigns were a legitimate function of local government. The question had been designed to allow women to express opposition to the campaign without being identified as 'pro-violence'. However all but a few argued that this issue was indeed a legitimate part of local politics.

We're representing a huge amount of people so therefore we have to represent their rights - and anything that is going to enhance their lives, we have to look at and that sort of issue has to be raised, and that sort of issue has to be looked at it can't stay hidden under the carpet or behind doors - and that's where it was. (SNP)

Over half the electorate in the City of Edinburgh are women and at the moment it is not safe for women to go out, dressed however they wish, whatever time of day or night in all parts of our city without being in danger of sexual attack. And I think it is perfectly legitimate for civic leaders to be trying to create an environment in which they can do all these things[...] There is still, in this city, a view among some men that a girl walking across The Meadows at 2 o'clock in the morning, wearing a mini-skirt, is quotes "asking for it" close quotes. That is very wrong and that actually creates an atmosphere which tolerates attacks on women and I think it is part of our job to change that. (Con)

Furthermore women councillors, both feminist and non feminist, appear to be becoming increasingly convinced that their presence makes a difference in terms of the promotion of women's interests. In the current study 93% of the women councillors interviewed believed that the campaign would definitely not or was unlikely to have happened without the existence of an equalities structure; 89%

believed it would not or it was unlikely to have happened without the presence of elected women members.

I doubt it - I cant see any man grasping that particular nettle.(Con)

It would be light years away because lots of men wouldn't accept that there *is* violence. (Lab)

This would seem to indicate a greater sense of the acceptance of gender and equalities issues as legitimate across parties within local government than has generally been argued. It also supports the view that the presence of women councillors in sufficient numbers is significant in terms of both the promotion of women's interests and the definition of politics as broader than traditional conceptions.

Conclusions: Towards Convergence - A women's agenda ?

The *Zero Tolerance* campaign reflected the shared values of feminists within the state and the women's movement. There was a shared definition of violence as an abuse of the power that men are accorded in present social structures. In evaluations and other research this naming of men and the analysis of violence as an abuse of power have proved the most challenging and controversial aspects of the campaign. There was a shared understanding of the links between all forms of violence and sexual coercion, for example domestic violence, child sex abuse and rape. There was also concern to 'name' emotional and psychological abuse as forms of violence and to place them along a continuum of violence.

Although women's aid, rape crisis and other women's support groups did not 'own' the campaign, their definition of the issue was shared by the women with power - the femocrats - within the policy community. Uniquely, the issue was not given to the politicians nor senior managers for definition or negotiation. The existence of a full time campaigns officer in the Women's Unit meant that, in this instance, the policy community was the women's unit and women's movement groups were 'insiders'. This was in marked contrast to the experience of women's groups in the run-up to the Scottish Office campaign where although they were included in the policy process, they were unable to shape the agenda. Furthermore the Scottish Office was able to flag their involvement in the working party as evidence of

consultation and co-operation, despite their substantive reservations about the campaign.¹³

Support for the *Zero Tolerance* campaign by women's aid, rape crisis and other women's support groups has remained largely firm, despite increased pressure on their services. They have been active and proactive in developing *Zero Tolerance* and have taken the lead in developing materials and organising seminars and conferences. This is in contrast to received wisdom that the women's movement's relationship with the state and women's initiatives within the state are likely to be characterised by ambivalence, suspicion and disappointment. Despite increased workloads and as yet little pay-off in the shape of increased resources, women's groups have taken a long term view that the *Zero Tolerance* campaign will provide them with leverage to press for adequate funding and has shifted the focus of public perception about the issue from one of social welfare to one of political concern. As such, the case study would suggest a convergence between the agendas of feminist activists and 'municipal' feminists.

Evidence from the study suggests that feminists may be gaining some leverage from their intervention in the state, through women's committees and women's units, to control and define certain issues. This underlines the importance of the creation and maintenance of reasonably strong and integrated women's or equal opportunities structures in order to provide both the space and the initiatives for promoting change and suggests that women's committees can act as proactive agents of feminist change. The women's committee at Edinburgh was mature in terms of its structure, staffing, support and resources. It had learned lessons from the early history of women's initiatives particularly skills of political management and the construction of legitimacy via consultation with women in the community and autonomous women's groups. Indeed, all the participating authorities running *Zero Tolerance* have women's or equalities structures in place (although in one case, Strathclyde, it has only the status of an advisory group). In addition, all the participating authorities have had at least one specialist officer in post who has liaised through a *Zero Tolerance* officers' network, part of the established Scottish Women's and Equal Opportunities Officers' Forum (SWEOF).

Alliances of women specialist officers, other women officers, women councillors, activists in the women's movement, the trade union movement, political parties and

voluntary and public service sectors have been instrumental in getting *Zero Tolerance* over any overt 'wobbles' and covert resistance. They have ensured the continued high profile of the campaign in Edinburgh and have, in different configurations, ensured that the campaign has been adopted and progressed by other authorities throughout Scotland (and Britain).

The massive support which characterised the *Zero Tolerance* campaign illustrates the salience of issue of violence for women in general and a possible diffusion of feminist values which has changed the social and political context in which violence against women is discussed. It would appear that feminism has been successful in revealing the political nature of so-called women's issues such as violence, and that many women politicians now share these newer definitions of what constitutes 'proper' politics. This is underlined by the findings of the current study where there was consensus amongst female politicians across party, generation and degree of gender consciousness that tackling such issues and taking a moral lead were a legitimate part of local government. It also underlines the significance of the presence of women in politics, both feminist and non feminist, for the articulation and promotion of women's concerns. The case study suggests violence is an issue around which women, political and non-political, feminist and non feminist can work together. Finally the evidence tentatively suggests the existence of an emerging 'women's politics', a broad-based woman's politics which crosses traditional boundaries and where women as women are successfully intervening in the local state and making a difference.

Bibliography

- Barrett, Michèle (1987) 'The Concept of 'Difference'', *Feminist Review* , No.26
- Boneparth,E and Soper,E (eds), (1988)*Women, Policy and Power: Toward the Year 2000*, Pergamon Press.
- Breitenbach, Esther (1990) ' "Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves": The Women's Movement in Scotland' in A.Brown and R.Parry (eds) *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1990* , The Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland, University of Edinburgh.
- Breitenbach, Esther (1995a) 'Examples of Good Practice: Zero Tolerance Campaign' in *Quality Through Equality* , Equal Opportunities Commission (Scotland).
- Breitenbach, Esther (1995b)'The Women's Movement in Scotland in the 1990s', in *Waverley Papers*, Department of Politics, University of Edinburgh.
- Brown, Alice and Galligan, Yvonne (1993) 'Changing the Political Agenda for Women in the Republic of Ireland and in Scotland', *West European Politics*, Vol.16, No.2, April.

- Brown, Alice (1995a) 'Plans for a Scottish Parliament: Did Women Make a Difference?', in *Waverley Papers*, Department of Politics, University of Edinburgh.
- Brown, Alice (1995b) *In the Name of Democracy: The Fight for Equal Representation in Scotland*, paper presented to Political Studies Association Conference, York, April.
- Brown, Alice (1995c) The Scotswoman's Parliament, *Parliamentary Brief*, April.
- Brown, Alice (1996) 'Women and Scottish Politics', in A. Brown, D. McCrone and L. Paterson, *Politics and Society in Scotland*, Macmillan (Basingstoke).
- Burness, Catriona (1995) in *Parliamentary Brief*, March.
- Carroll, Susan (1992) 'Women State Legislators, Women's Organizations, and the Representation of Women's Culture in the United States' in Bystydzienski, Jill (ed) *Women Transforming Politics*, Indiana University Press (Bloomington).
- Coote, A and Patullo, P (1990), *Power And Prejudice: Women And Politics*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson (London)
- Dahlerup, D (1988) 'From a small to a large minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol.11, no.4 .
- Dobash R Emerson and Dobash, Russell P. (1992) *Violence and Social Change*, Routledge (London)
- Edwards, J.(1995) *Local Government Women's Committees*, Avebury (Aldershot)
- Engender (1994) *Gender Audit 1994*, Engender (Edinburgh)
- Engender (1995) *Gender Audit 1995*, Engender (Edinburgh)
- Falchikov, N(1992) *Adolescents' Knowledge About, and attitudes to Domestic Violence, summary findings*, report to the Women's Committee Unit, Edinburgh District Council.
- Firestone, Shulamith (1972) *Dialectics of Sex: The Case For Feminist Revolution*, Paladin (London)
- Gelb, J and Palley, M.L (1987) *Women and Public Policies*, Princeton University Press.
- Haavio-Mannila, E. et al.,(1985) *Unfinished Democracy: Women in Nordic Politics*, Pergamon Press(Oxford).
- Hague, Gill and Malos, Ellen (1994/95) 'Domestic Violence, Social Policy And Housing', *Critical Social Policy*, No 42 p.113, Winter .
- Halford, Susan (1988) ' Women's initiatives in local government...where do they come from and where are they going?', in *Policy and Politics*, vol.16 no.4
- Hanmer, J, Radford, J and Stanko, E (eds) (1989) *Women, Policy and Male Violence*, Routledge (London)
- Hedlund, Gun (1988) ' Women's Interests in Local Politics', in Jones K and Jonasdottir, A (eds) *The Political Interests of Gender*, Sage (London)
- Hunt, L (1986) *The GLC Women's Committee, 1982-86: A Record of Change and Achievement for Women in London*, GLC Publication Information Branch (London)
- Kelly, Ellen (1992) 'The Future of Women in Scottish Local Government', *Scottish Affairs*, No.1, Autumn.
- Kelly, Ellen (1995) 'Sweeties from the Boys' Poke?': An Examination of Women's Committees in Scottish Local Government, unpublished MSc thesis.
- Kelly, Liz (1988) *Surviving Sexual Violence*, Polity Press (Cambridge)
- Kelly, Liz, Burton, Sheila and Regan, Linda (1994) *Beyond Victim or Survivor: Sexual Violence, Identity and Feminist Theory and Practice* paper presented to the British Sociological Association Conference, Preston, April.
- Kitzinger, J and Hunt, K (1993) *Evaluation of Edinburgh District Council's Zero Tolerance Campaign: Full Report*, Glasgow University Media Group/Edinburgh District Council's Women's Committee.
- Lieberman, S (1989) 'Women's Committees in Scotland', in A. Brown and D. McCrone (eds), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1989*, University of Edinburgh

- Lovenduski, J and Randall, V (1993) *Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain*, Oxford University Press.
- McWilliams, M and McKiernan, J (1993) *Bringing it Out in The Open: Domestic Violence in Northern Ireland*, HMSO (Belfast).
- Randall, V (1987) *Women and Politics* (2nd Edition) Macmillan (Basingstoke)
- Randall, V (1992) 'Great Britain and Dilemmas for Feminist Strategy in the 1980's in Bystydzienski, Jill (ed) *Women Transforming Politics*, Indiana University Press (Bloomington).
- Riddoch, Lesley (1994) *Zero Tolerance: the Second Wave, Harpies and Quines*, No.12, March .
- Smith, Lorna (1989) *Domestic Violence*, Home Office Research Study 107, HMSO (London).
- Stevenson, B (1990) *Women's Consultation Exercise*, Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee
- Young, K (1990) 'Approaches to Policy Development in the Field of Equal Opportunities' in Ball, W, and Solomos, J (eds) *Race and Local Politics*, Macmillan (Basingstoke).

References

- ¹ Source: EDC Women's Unit, March 1995
- ² The authorities studied were: Edinburgh District Council, Aberdeen District Council, Strathclyde Regional Council and Tayside Regional Council
- ³ For other aspects of the debate and further references see the papers of Esther Breitenbach and Alice Brown in this series of Waverley Papers
- ⁴ L. Riddoch 'Zero Tolerance: The Second Wave' in *Harpies and Quines* , no.12, March 1994
- ⁵ On December 6, 1989, fourteen young female engineering students were murdered in Montreal , Canada by a young man who wanted to kill 'those damned feminists'. The 'Montreal Massacre' was the catalyst which spurred the Canadian Federal Government into taking action to end violence against women. On February 10, 1991, the Government announced a four-year Family Violence Initiative with funding of 136 million dollars which was implemented from January 1993. It builds upon provincial, municipal and grassroots initiatives, notably in Ontario, where work has been carried out since 1983. (Briefing paper, 'Canadian Initiatives on Violence Against Women', Making Z-Way: Ayrshire Zero Tolerance Conference, March 6, 1995.) Since 1992, Ontario has run a public awareness campaign as part of their Sexual Assault Prevention campaign, involving TV, radio and press advertisements, posters, badges and other promotional materials. They have also run a public education campaign aimed at 'wife assault prevention' (Westmount Research Consultants Inc, 1992 cited by Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993)
- ⁶ The phrase *Zero Tolerance* was drawn out of the Canadian literature and headlined by the Edinburgh team. The Z logo was designed by freelance designer Franki Raffles.
- ⁷ For an overview of refuge movement see Lovenduski and Randall (1993), Dobash and Dobash (1992) Hanmer, Radford and Stanko (1989); Smith (1989) McWilliams and McKeirnan (1993)
- ⁸ Scottish Women's Aid Newsletter, Spring/Summer 1995
- ⁹ It is not immune to hostile media coverage. For example the so-called 'Condomgate' incident in March 1992 when a Conservative woman councillor caused a political and media storm by producing

what she alleged were used condoms found after a party in the City Chambers to celebrate International Women's Day. The media responded with headlines such as 'Sin City Chambers: Orgy Outrage over Used Condoms', (*Daily Record*, March 9, 1992). The Chief Executive launched an inquiry and the 'evidence' was sent off to the public analyst where they were duly found to contain nothing but carpet dust. ('Orgy Claim Missed Target', *Edinburgh Evening News*, March 27, 1992). See extensive coverage between March 9, 1992 and March 27, 1992 in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Herald*, *The Scotsman*, *Scottish Sun* and *Daily Record* .

¹⁰ In the street survey 86% of women felt 'positive' or 'very positive' about the campaign compared with 68% of men (Kitzinger and Hunt, 1993, Table. 4a.)

¹¹ The Scotsman, May 15, 1993

¹² Quotations concerning women councillors' personal experiences of violence are anonymous

¹³ Scottish Women's Aid Newsletter, Spring / Summer 1995)

Bibliography

- Ackelsberg, L., & Diamond, L. (1987). 'Gender and Political Life: New Directions in Political Science,' in B. Hess & M. Farree (eds.), *Analysing Gender : A Handbook of Social Science Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Amos, V., & Parmar, P. (1984). 'Challenging Imperialist Feminism' in *Feminist Review*, 17.
- Antolini, D. (1984). 'Women in Local Government: An Overview,' in J. A. Flammang (eds.), *Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Ås, B. (1975). 'On Female Culture: An Attempt to Formulate a Theory of Women's Solidarity and Action' in *Acta Sociologica*, 18(2-3).
- Bacchi, C. (1990). *Same Difference: Feminism and Sexual Difference*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Barrett, M. (1987). 'The Concept of "Difference" in *Feminist Review*, 26.
- Barrett, M., & Phillips, A. (eds.). (1992). *De-stabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Barron, J., Crawley, G., & Wood, T. (1991). *Councillors in Crisis: the Public and Private Worlds of Local Councillors*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Barry, J. (1991). *The Women's Movement and Local Politics*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Beechey, V., & Perkins, T. (1985). 'Conceptualising Part-time Work,' in B. Roberts et al (eds.), *New Approaches to Economic Life*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1971). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bers, T. H. (1978). 'Local Political Elites: Men and Women on Boards of Education' in *Western Political Quarterly* (September).
- Birch, A. H. (1971). *Representation*. London: Macmillan.
- Bock, G., & James, S. (eds.). (1992). *Beyond Equality and Difference*. London: Routledge.
- Boneparth, E., & Stoper, E. (eds.). (1988). *Women, Policy and Power: Toward the Year 2000*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Bono, P., & Kemp, S. (ed.). (1991). *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Bourque, S., & Grossholtz, J. (1984). 'Politics an Unnatural Practice: Political Science looks at Female Participation,' in J. Siltanen & M. Stanworth (eds.), *Women and the Public Sphere*. London: Hutchinson.
- Brannen, J., Meszaros, G., Moss, P., & Poland, J. (1994). *Employment and Family Life : A Review of Research in the UK (1980-1994)* London: Department of Employment.
- Brannen, J., & Moss, P. (1991). *Managing Mothers: Dual Earner Households after Maternity Leave*. London: Macmillan.
- Breitenbach, E. (1990). 'Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves': The Women's Movement in Scotland,' in A. Brown & R. Parry (eds.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1990*. Edinburgh.: The Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland.
- Breitenbach, E. (1995a). *Quality Through Equality Equal Opportunities Commission (Scotland)*.

- Breitenbach, E. (1995b). 'The Women's Movement in Scotland in the 1990s,' in *Waverley Papers*. Department of Politics: University of Edinburgh.
- Bristow, S. (1980). 'Women Councillors: An Explanation of the Underrepresentation of Women in Local Government' in *Local Government Studies*, 6(3).
- Brown, A. (1995a). 'Plans for a Scottish Parliament: Did Women Make a Difference?,' in *Waverley Papers*. Department of Politics: University of Edinburgh.
- Brown, A. (1995b). 'In the Name of Democracy: The Fight for Equal Representation in Scotland', paper presented to Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association Conference. 18-20 April, York.
- Brown, A. (1995c). 'The Scotswoman's Parliament' in *Parliamentary Brief* (April).
- Brown, A. (1996). 'Women and Scottish Politics,' in A. Brown, D. McCrone, & L. Paterson (eds.), *Politics and Society in Scotland*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Brown, A., & Galligan, Y. (1993). 'Changing the Political Agenda for Women in the Republic of Ireland and in Scotland' in *West European Politics*, 16(2 /April.).
- Brown, A., & Galligan, Y. (1995). 'Why So Few Seats in the House for Irish and Scottish Women? Women's Views From the Periphery of Europe', paper presented to Women and Politics in Ireland, the Second National Conference of the P.S.A.I.
- Brown, B., Burman, M., & Jamieson, L. (1993). *Sex Crimes on Trial: The Use of Sexual Evidence in Scottish Courts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bryson, V. (1992). *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Bulmer, M. (ed.). (1984). *Sociological Research Methods : An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Burness, C. (1995). in *Parliamentary Brief* (March).
- Button, S. (1984). *Women's Committees* (Working Paper 45). School for Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol.
- Bystydzienski, J. (ed.). (1992). *Women Transforming Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Campbell, B. (1987). *The Iron Ladies*. London: Virago.
- Carby, H. (1982). 'White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood,' in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70's Britain*. London: Hutchison.
- Carroll, S. (1984). 'Women Candidates and Support for Feminist Concerns: The Closet Feminist Syndrome' in *Western Political Quarterly*, 37(2).
- Carroll, S. (1985). *Women as Candidates in American Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Carroll, S. (1992). 'Women State Legislators, Women's Organizations, and the Representation of Women's Culture in the United States,' in J. Bystydzienski (eds.), *Women Transforming Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) (1978). *Women in Public Office*. Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) (1983). *Women Make a Difference*. Rutgers NJ: Eagleton Institute of Politics.
- Chapman, J. (1986). 'The Political Motivations of Women Candidates for Local Political Office: A Generational Comparison', paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association.
- Chapman, J. (1987). 'Adult Socialisation and Out-group Politicization' in *British Journal of Political Studies*, 17(3/July).
- Cockburn, C. (1977). *The Local State*. London: Pluto Press.
- Cockburn, C. (1985). *Machinery of Dominance*. London: Macmillan.
- Cockburn, C. (1987). *Women, Trade Unions and Political Parties*, London: Fabian Research Series no.349.

- Cockburn, C. (1989). 'Equal Opportunities: The Short and Long Agenda' in *Industrial Relations Journal*(20).
- Cockburn, C. (1991). *In the Way of Women: Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organizations*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Conover, P. J. (1994). 'The Nature of the Gender Gap,' in M. Githens, P. Norris, & J. Lovenduski (eds.), *Different Roles, Different Voices: Women and Politics in the United States and Europe*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Coole, D. H. (1993). *Women in Political Theory: From Ancient Misogyny to Contemporary Feminism* (2nd ed.). Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Coote, A., & Patullo, P. (1990). *Power And Prejudice: Women and Politics*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Currell, M. (1974). *Political Women*. London: Croom Helm.
- Dahlerup, D. (1988). 'From a Small to a Large Minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics' in *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 11(4).
- Daly, M. (1979). *Gyn/Ecology*. London: The Women's Press.
- Denver, D., & Bochel, H. (1994). 'The Regional Elections of 1994' in *Scottish Affairs*, No.9, Autumn.
- Denzin, N. (1970). *The Research Act*. London: Butterworth.
- Dex, S., & Shaw, L. (1986). *British and American Women at Work: Do Equal Opportunity Policies Matter?* London: Macmillan.
- DGX (1995). *Information Communication* (no. 55). Brussels: Commission of the European Community
- Diamond, I., & Hartsock, N. (1981). 'Beyond Interests in Politics : A Comment on Virginia Sapiro's 'When are Interests Interesting' in *American Political Science Review*(September).
- Dietz, M. G. (1985). 'Citizenship with a Feminist Face: The Problem with Maternal Thinking' in *Political Theory*, 13(1/ Feb).
- Dietz, M. G. (1987). 'Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship' in *Daedalus*, 116(4).
- Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (1992). *Violence and Social Change*. London: Routledge.
- DuBois, E., & al, e. (1980). 'Politics and Culture in Women's History : A Symposium' in *Feminist Studies*, 6(Spring).
- Dunhill, C. (ed.). (1989). *The Boys in Blue*. London: Virago.
- Edwards, J. (1988). 'Local Government Women's Committees' in *Local Government Studies*(July/August).
- Edwards, J. (1989). 'Women's Committee: A Model for Good Local Government?' in *Policy and Politics*, 17(3).
- Edwards, J. (1995). *Local Government Women's Committees*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Eisenstein, H. (1991). *Gender Shock: Practising Feminism on Two Continents*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Engender (1993). *Gender Audit 1993*. Edinburgh: Engender.
- Engender (1994). *Gender Audit 1994*. Edinburgh: Engender.
- Engender (1995). *Gender Audit 1995*. Edinburgh: Engender.
- Evans, J. (1995). *Feminist Theory Today: An Introduction to Second Wave Feminism*. London: Sage.
- Evans, J. et al. (1986). *Feminism and Political Theory*. London: Sage.
- Falchikov, N. (1992). *Adolescents' Knowledge about, and attitudes to Domestic Violence: Summary Findings*. Edinburgh: Women's Committee Unit Edinburgh District Council.
- Farah, B. (1976). 'Climbing the Political Ladder: The Aspirations and Expectations of Partisan Elites,' in D. McGuigan (eds.), *New Research on Women and Sex Roles*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Finer, S. E. (1985). 'The Contemporary Context of Representation,' in V. Bognador (ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies*. Aldershot: Gower.
- Firestone, S. (1972). *Dialectics of Sex: The Case For Feminist Revolution*. London: Paladin.
- Fisher, B., & Tronto, J. (1991). 'Towards a Feminist Theory of Care,' in E. Abel & M. Nelson (eds.), *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press.
- Flammang, J. A. (1984a). 'Introduction: A Reflection on Themes of a 'Women's Politics', in J. A. Flammang (eds.), *Political Women*. Beverley Hills: Sage.
- Flammang, J. A. (ed.). (1984b). *Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government*. Beverley Hills: Sage.
- Flammang, J. A. (1985). 'Female Officials in the Feminist Capital: The Case of Santa Clara County' in *Western Political Quarterly*, 38(March).
- Franzway, S., Court, D., & Connell, R. W. (1989). *Staking a Claim: Feminism, Bureaucracy and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Freedman, E. B. (1990). 'Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference: An Overview,' in D. Rhode (ed.), *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*. Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Gallagher, M., & Marsh, M. (1988). *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective*. London: Sage.
- Gelb, J., & Palley, M. L. (1987). *Women and Public Policies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Githens, M. (1984). 'Women and State Politics: An Assessment,' in J. A. Flammang (ed.), *Political Women*. Beverley Hills: Sage.
- Githens, M., & Prestage, J. (ed.). (1977). *A Portrait of Marginality: The Political Behavior of the American Woman*. New York: Longman.
- Githens, M., Norris, P. & Lovenduski, J. (eds.), *Different Roles, Different Voices: Women and Politics in the United States and Europe*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. London: Weidenfield & Nicholson.
- Glendinning, C., & Millar, J. (ed.). (1992). *Women and Poverty in Britain*. London: Wheatsheaf.
- Gordon, L. (1988). *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960*. London: Virago.
- Goss, S. (1984). 'Women's Initiatives in Local Government,' in M. Boddy & C. Fudge (eds.), *Local Socialism?*. London: Macmillan.
- Griffin, S. (1978). *Woman and Nature: The Roaring inside Her*. New York: Harper Row.
- Gross, D. A. (1978). 'Representative Styles and Legislative Behavior' in *Western Political Quarterly* (September).
- Guadagnini, M. (1990). *Unfinished Democracy: What Kind of Strategy for a Real Change* (report no. CPL/CEEG (90)12). Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Haavio-Mannila, E., et al. (1985). *Unfinished Democracy: Women in Nordic Politics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Hague, G., & Malos, E. (1994/95). 'Domestic Violence, Social Policy and Housing' in *Critical Social Policy*, 42(Winter).
- Halford, S. (1988). 'Women's initiatives in local government...where do they come from and where are they going?' in *Policy and Politics*, 16(4).
- Halford, S. (1992). 'Feminist change in a patriarchal organisation: the experience of women's initiatives in local government and implications for feminist perspectives

- on state institutions,' in M. Savage & A. Witz (eds.), *Gender and Bureaucracy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hanmer, J., Radford, J., & Stanko, E. (eds.). (1989). *Women, Policy and Male Violence*. London: Routledge.
- Harding, S. (ed.). (1987). *Feminism and Methodology*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Hartsock, N. (1987). 'The Feminist Standpoint: Developing The Ground For A Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism,' in S. Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Hedlund, G. (1988). 'Women's Interests in Local Politics,' in K. Jones & A. Jonasdottir (eds.), *The Political Interests of Gender*. London: Sage.
- Heldke, L. (1988). 'Recipes for Theory Making' in *Hypatia*, 3
- Hernes, H. M., & Voje, K. (1980). 'Women in the Corporate Channel in Norway: A Process of Natural Exclusion?' in *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 3(2).
- Hills, J. (1981). 'Candidates: The Impact of Gender' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 34
- Hills, J. (1983). 'The Lifestyle Constraints on Women Councillors' in *Electoral Studies*, 2(1).
- Holsti, O., & Rosenau, J. (1982). 'The Foreign Policy Beliefs of Women in Leadership Positions,' in E. Boneparth (ed.), *Women, Power and Policy*. New York: Pergamon.
- hooks, b. (1982). *Ain't I a woman?: Black Women and Feminism*. London: Pluto Press.
- Houston, B. (1985). 'Prolegomana to Future Caring' in *Hypatia*, 7
- Humphries, J., & Rubery, J. (1995). *The Economics of Equal Opportunities*. Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission.
- Hunt, L. (1986). *The GLC Women's Committee, 1982-86: A Record of Change and Achievement for Women in London*. London: GLC Publication Information Branch.
- Iglitzin, L. (1974). 'The Making of the Apolitical Women: Femininity and Sex Stereotyping in Girls,' in J. Jacquette (ed.), *Women and Politics*. New York: Wiley.
- Innes, S. (1995). *Making It Work: Women, Change and Challenge in the 90's*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Janeway, E. (1980). *Powers of the Weak*. New York: Morrow.
- Jeffreys, S. (1985). *The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930*. London: The Women's Press.
- Jennings, M. K., & Thomas, N. (1968). 'Men and Women in Party Elites: Social Roles and Political Resources' in *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 12(4).
- Jewson, N., & Mason, D. (1986). 'The Theory and Practice of Equal Opportunities Policies' in *Sociological Review*, 34(2).
- Jonasdottir, A. G. (1988). 'On the Concept of Interest: Women's Interests and the Limitations of Interest Theory,' in K. Jones & A. G. Jonasdottir (eds.), *The Political Interests of Gender*. London: Sage.
- Kanter, R. (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kelly, E. (1992). 'The Future of Women in Scottish Local Government' in *Scottish Affairs*, 1(Autumn).
- Kelly, E. (1995) *Sweeties from the Boy's Poke?* unpublished MSc thesis, University of Strathclyde.
- Kelly, L. (1988). *Surviving Sexual Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kelly, L., Burton, S., & Regan, L. (1994). 'Beyond Victim or Survivor: Sexual Violence, Identity and Feminist Theory and Practice'. Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association Conference, Preston.
- Kelly, R., & Boulton, M. (1978). *The Making of the Political Woman: A Study of Socialization and Role Conflict*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Kettleborough, H. (1988). 'Consulting Women in the Community about Local Government Services' in *Critical Social Policy* (21 Spring).

- Kirkpatrick, J. (1974). *Political Women*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kitzinger, J., & Hunt, K. (1993). *Evaluation of Edinburgh District Council's Zero Tolerance Campaign: Full Report*, Glasgow University Media Group/Edinburgh District Council's Women's Committee.
- Lake, M. (1986). 'A Question of Time,' in D. McKnight (ed.), *Moving Left: The Future of Socialism in Australia*. Sidney and London: Pluto Press.
- Lane, R. E. (1959). *Political Life*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press.
- Lee, M. M. (1976). 'Why Few Women Hold Public Office: Democracy and Sex Roles' in *Political Science Quarterly*, 91(2).
- Leijenaar, M. (1989). *De Geschade heerlijkheid (politiek gedrag van vrouwen en mannen in Nederland, 1918-1988)*. Amsterdam
- Leijenaar, M., & Mahon, E. (1992). *Power to What End? Nijmegen Political Science Reports*. University of Nijmegen.
- LeLohe, M. J. (1976). 'Sex Discrimination and Under-representation of Women in Politics' in *New Community*, 5(1-2/ Summer).
- Levy, C. (1992). 'A Woman's Place ? The Future Scottish Parliament,' in L. Paterson & D. McCrone (eds.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1992*. Edinburgh: The Unit For the Study of Government in Scotland, University of Edinburgh.
- Liddington, J., & Norris, J. (1978). *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*. London: Virago.
- Lieberman, S. (1989). 'Women's Committees in Scotland,' in A. Brown & D. McCrone (eds.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook 1989*. Edinburgh: Unit for the Study of Scotland, University of Edinburgh.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Trumansberg: The Crossing Press.
- Lovenduski, J. (1981). 'Towards the Emasculation of Political Science,' in D. Spender (ed.), *Men's Studies Modified*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Lovenduski, J. (1986). *Women and European Politics*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.
- Lovenduski, J. (1993). 'Introduction: the Dynamics of Gender and Party', in J. Lovenduski & P. Norris (eds), *Gender and Party Politics*. Sage: London.
- Lovenduski, J., & Norris, P. (1989). 'Selecting Women Candidates: Obstacles to the Feminisation of the House of Commons' in *European Journal of Political Research*, 17(Autumn).
- Lovenduski, J., & Norris, P. (1993). *Gender and Party Politics*. Sage: London.
- Lovenduski, J., & Randall, V. (1993). *Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCormack, T. (1975). 'Towards a Non-Sexist Perspective on Social and Political Change' in M. Millman & R. Moss Kanter (eds.), *Another Voice*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday-Anchor.
- Mackay, F. (1990) *Unrepresentative Democracy*.. Unpublished BA(Hons) thesis, University of Manchester.
- Mahon, E. (1991). 'Women and Equality in the Irish Civil Service,' in E. Meehan & S. Sevenhuijsen (eds.), *Equality Politics and Gender*. London: Sage.
- Marks, E., & de Courtivron, I. (eds.). (1981). *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Marsh, C. (1984). 'Problems with Surveys: Method or Epistemology?,' in M. Bulmer (ed.), *Sociological Research Methods: An Introduction*, . Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Marsh, M., & Gallagher, M. (eds.). (1988). *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective*. London: Sage.
- Martlew, C., Forrester, C., & Buchanan, G. (1985). 'Activism and Office: Women and Local Government in Scotland' in *Local Government Studies*, 11(2).
- Massey, M. C. (1985). *The Feminine Soul : The Fate of an Ideal*. Boston: Beacon Books.

- Mattison, D., & Hewitt, P. (1989). *Women's Votes: The Key to Winning* London: Fabian Research Series.
- McCrone, D., Paterson, L., & Brown, A. (1996). *Politics and Society in Scotland*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- McLean, I. (1991). 'Forms of Representation and Systems of Voting,' in D. Held (ed.), *Political Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- McWilliams, M., & McKiernan, J. (1993). *Bringing it Out in The Open: Domestic Violence in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: HMSO.
- Meehan, E. (1986). 'Women's Studies and Political Studies,' in J. Evans et al. (eds.), *Feminism and Political Theory*. London: Sage.
- Meehan, E., & Sevenhuijsen, S. (eds.). (1991a). *Equality Politics and Gender*. London: Sage.
- Meehan, E., & Sevenhuijsen, S. (1991b). 'Problems in Principles and Policies,' in E. Meehan & S. Sevenhuijsen (eds.), *Equality Politics and Gender*. London: Sage.
- Mendus, S. (1992). 'Strangers and Brothers : Liberalism, Socialism and the Concept of Autonomy,' in D. Milligan & W. W. Miller (eds.), *Liberalism, Citizenship and Autonomy*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Merritt, S. (1980). 'Sex Differences in Role Behavior and Policy Orientations of Suburban Office Holders: The Effect of Women's Employment,' in D. Stewart (ed.), *Women in Local Politics*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Mezey, S. G. (1978). 'Does Sex Make a Difference?: A Case Study of Women in Politics' in *Western Political Quarterly*(December).
- Moller Okin, S. (1989). *Justice, Gender and the Family*. New York: Basic Books.
- Moller Okin, S. (1990). 'Thinking Like a Woman,' in D. Rhode (ed.), *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*. Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Moller Okin, S. (1992). *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton Guilford, Princeton University Press).
- Neuse, S., M. (1978). 'Professionalism and Authority: Women in Public Service' in *Public Administrative Review*(September/October).
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Noddings, N. (1990). 'Ethics from the Standpoint of Women,' in D. Rhode (ed.), *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*. Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Norris, P. (1985). 'Women's Legislative Participation in Western Europe' in *West European Politics.*, Vol.8(No.4).
- Norris, P. (1986a). 'Conservative Attitudes in Recent General Elections: An Emerging Gender Gap?' in *Political Studies*, 34
- Norris, P. (1986b). 'Women in Congress: A Policy Difference ?' in *Politics*, Vol.6(1).
- Norris, P. (1993a). 'The Gender generation gap in British Elections,' in D. Denver et al. (eds.), *British Parties and Elections Yearbook 1993*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Norris, P. (1993b). 'Slow Progress for Women MPs' in *Parliamentary Brief*(November/ December).
- Norris, P. (1994) 'Introduction' in M. Githens et al. (eds) *Different Roles, Different Voices: Women and Politics in the United States and Europe*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Norris, P. & Lovenduski, J. (1995). *Political Recruitment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.
- O'Brien, M. (1981). *The Politics of Reproduction*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- O'Neill, N. (1989). 'The Great Maxims of Justice and Charity,' in N. MacCormick & Z. Banhowski (eds.), *Enlightenment, Rights and Revolution*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press.

- Offen, K. (1992). 'Defining feminism : A Comparative Historical Approach,' in G.Bock & S. James (eds.), *Beyond Equality and Difference* . London: Routledge.
- Pahl, J. (1985). *Private Violence and Public Policy : The Needs of Battered Women and the Response of Public Services*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Pateman, C., & Grosz, E. (ed.). (1986). *Feminist Challenges : Social and Political Theory*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Paterson, L., Brown, A., & McCrone, D. (1992). 'Constitutional Crisis: the Causes and Consequences of the 1992 Scottish General Election Result' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, , vol.45,(4 October.).
- Phillips, A. (1987). *Divided Loyalties: Dilemmas of Sex and Class*. London: Virago.
- Phillips, A. (1991). *Engendering Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Phillips, A. (1993). *Democracy and Difference*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Phillips, M. (1980). *The Divided House*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.
- Pitkin, H. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (1976). *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Radice, L. (1985). *Winning Women's Votes* London: Fabian Tract no.507.
- Randall, V. (1987). *Women and Politics* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Randall, V. (1991). 'Feminism and Political Analysis' in *Political Studies*, XXXIX
- Randall, V. (1992). 'Great Britain and Dilemmas for Feminist Strategy in the 1980's,' in J. Bystydzienski (ed.), *Women Transforming Politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rendall, J. (1987). *Equal or Different : Women's Politics 1800-1914*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Rhode, D. (1990a). 'Introduction,' in D. Rhode (ed.), *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference* . Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Rhode, D. (ed.). (1990b). *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*. Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Rhode, D. (1992). 'The Politics of Paradigms:Gender Difference and Gender Disadvantage,' in G. Bock & S. James (eds.), *Beyond Equality and Difference* . London and New York: Routledge.
- Rich, A. (1976). *Of Woman Born : Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: W.W.Norton.
- Richards, J. (1982). *The Sceptical Feminist*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Roleoffs, S. (1983). 'G.L.C Women's Committee-Democracy or Feminism' in *Labour London Briefing*(April).
- Rowbotham, S. (1985). 'What Do Women Want?' in *Feminist Review*, 20(June).
- Rowbotham, S., et al. (1979). *Beyond the Fragments*. London: Merlin Press.
- Rubery, J. (ed.). (1988). *Women and Recession*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Ruddick, S. (1980). 'Maternal Thinking' in *Feminist Studies*, 6(2 Summer).
- Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal Thinking : Towards a Politics of Peace* (U.K edition 1990 Women's Press) Boston: Beacon Press.
- Showstack Sassoon, A. (ed.). (1987). *Women and the State*. London: Hutchison.
- Schatzman, L., & Strauss, A. L. (1973). *Field Research Strategies for Natural Sociology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Segal, L. (1987). *Is The Future Female?* London: Virago Press.
- Sevenhuijsen, S. (1991). 'Links Between Contextualised Moral Thinking and the Scottish Enlightenment,' in E. Meehan & S. Sevenhuijsen (eds.), *Equality Principles and Politics* . London: Sage.
- Seyd, P. (1987). *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

- Shaul, M. (1982). 'The Status of Women in Local Government' in *Public Administration Review*, 6
- Siltanen, J., & Stanworth, M. (1984). 'The Politics of Private Woman and Public Man,' in J. Siltanen & M. Stanworth (eds.), *Women and the Public Sphere: A Critique of Sociology and Politics*. London: Hutchinson.
- Skard, T., & Haavio-Mannila, E. (1985). 'Women in Parliament,' in E. Haavio-Mannila et al. (eds.), *Unfinished Democracy : Women in Nordic Politics*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Skeije, H. (1991a). 'The Rhetoric of Difference' in *Politics and Society*, 19 (2).
- Skjeie, H. (1991b). 'The Uneven Advance of Norwegian Women' in *New Left Review* (187).
- Skeije, H. (1995). 'Women in Politics in Norway'. Paper presented to the Conference on 'Women .Leadership and Equal Opportunities-Economic and Gender Perspectives in Norway and Scotland', organised by the Royal Norwegian Consulate and Equal Opportunities Commission (Scotland), Edinburgh, (15-17 June).
- Skrede, K. (1992). 'From Access to Integration : Women as Agents of Change in the Decision-making Process of Public Policy,' paper presented to the Gender and Power Workshop at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Limerick (30 March - 4 April).
- Smart, C. (1989). *Feminism and the Power of the Law*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Smith, L. (1989). *Domestic Violence: An Overview of the Literature*. London: HMSO.
- Staines, G., et al. (1974). 'The Queen Bee Syndrome' in *Psychology Today*(January).
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1986). *Georgie Porgie: Sexual Harassment in Everyday Life*. London: Pandora Press.
- Stedward, G. (1987). 'Entry into the System : A Case History of Women in Scotland,' in J. Richardson & G. Jordan (eds.), *Government and Pressure Groups in Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Stevenson, B. (1990). *Women's Consultation Exercise*, Report to Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee.
- Stoper, E. (1977). 'Wife and Politician: Role Strain Among Women in Public Office,' in M. Githens & J. Prestage (eds.), *A Portrait of Marginality*. New York: Longman.
- Thomas, S., & Welch, S. (1991). 'The Impact of Gender on Activities and Priorities of State Legislators' in *The Western Political Quarterly*, 44(2 June).
- Tronto, J. (1993). *Moral Boundaries*. London: Routledge.
- Vallance, E. (1979). *Women in the House*. London: Althone Press.
- Vallance, E., & Davies, E. (1986). *Women in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wahlke, J., Eulau, H., Buchanan, W., & Ferguson, L. (1962). *The Legislative Process: Explorations in Legislative Behavior*. New York: John Wiley.
- Wainwright, H. (1987). *Labour: A Tale of Two Parties*. London: The Hogarth Press.
- Wasoff, F., & Morris, S. (1996). 'The Child Support Act: A Victory for Women?,' in J. Millar & H. Jones (eds.), *The Politics of the Family*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Watson, S. (1992). 'Femocratic Feminisms,' in M. Savage & A. Witz (eds.), *Gender and Bureaucracy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Webb, J., & Liff, S. (1988). 'Play the White Man: The Social Construction of Fairness and Competition in Equal Opportunity Policies' in *Sociological Review*, 36(3 / August).

- Webster, W. (1990). *Not a Man to Match Her: The Marketing of a Prime Minister*. London: The Women's Press.
- Weitzman, L. (1985). *The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Financial Consequences for Women and Children in America*. New York: Free Press.
- Welch, S. (1985). 'Are Women More Liberal Than Men in the US Congress?' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, X(1/ February).
- Wikinson, H. (1994). *No Turning Back: Generations and The Genderquake*. London: Demos.
- Wilford, R., Miller, R., Bell, Y., & Donoghue, F. (1993). 'In Their Own Voices: Women Councillors in Northern Ireland' in *Public Administration*, 71(Autumn).
- Woman's Claim of Right Group (1991). *A Woman's Claim of Right in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Polygon.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.
- Young, I. M. (1989). 'Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship' in *Ethics*, 99
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and The Politics of Difference*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Young, K. (1990). 'Approaches to Policy Development in the Field of Equal Opportunities,' in W. Ball & J. Solomos (eds.), *Race and Local Politics*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.